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LENT LEGENDS.



Lent Legends.

STORIES FOR CHILDREN

FROM

CHURCH HISTORY

BY THE

REV. J. M. NEALE, M.A.,

WARDEN OF SACKVILLE COLLEGE.

LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS.

MDCCCLV.



110. d. 233.



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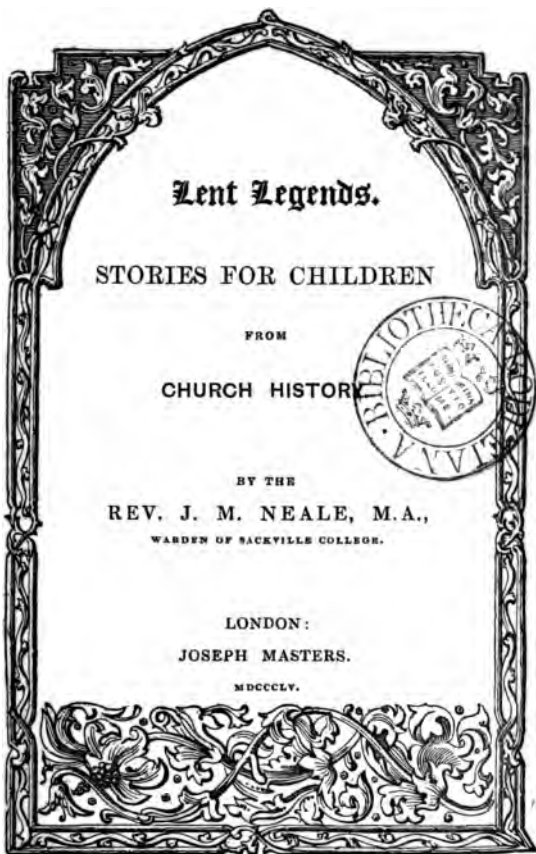
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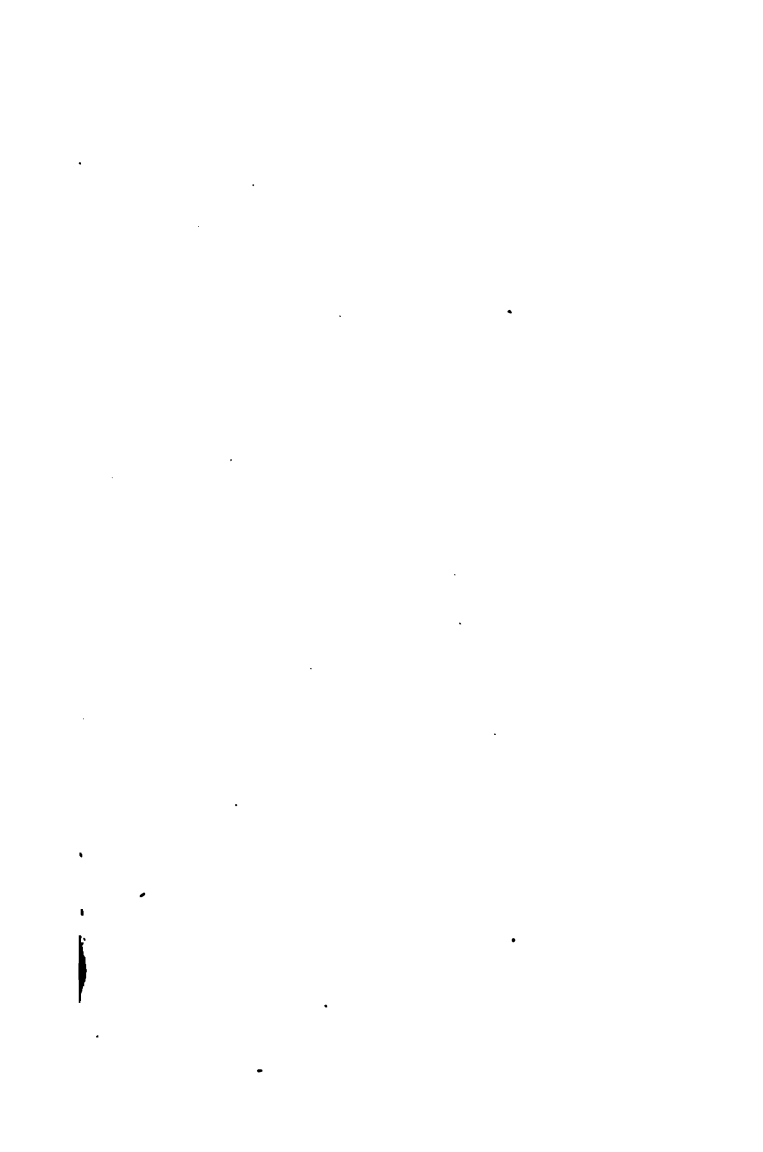
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“There nor waxing moon, nor waning :
Sun, nor stars in courses bright ;
For the LAMB to that glad City
Shines an everlasting light;
There the daylight beams for ever,
And unknown are time and night.

“There the saints in beauty beaming
Shine in light and glory pure,
There for ever crowned with triumph,
Joy in unison secure ;
And in safety tell their battles,
And their foes' discomfiture.”

S. PETER DAMIANI.

TO THE
REV. JAMES CARNEGIE, M.A.,
VICAR OF
SUTTON-CUM-SEAFORD,
These Stories
ARE
DEDICATED.



CONTENTS.

Ash Wednesday.

	PAGE
I. THE SIEGE OF OMURA	1
II. THE WOLF OF THE SPESSART WALD	27

First Sunday in Lent.

III. THE MARTYRS OF GORCUM	37
IV. THE OAK OF LUXFORD'S LANE	63

Second Sunday in Lent.

V. THE BOULDER OF VAL' DE PASSOS	81
VI. THE CALDRON OF CARCASSONE	97

Third Sunday in Lent.

VII. THE SACRIFICE OF ONNONTAGUE	111
VIII. THE CHALLENGE OF LUCIUS	131

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

IX. THE PROPHECY OF S. ISAAC	149
X. THE CIRCUS OF GAZA	169

Passion Sunday.

XI. THE SUPPER OF S. SPIRIDION	187
XII. THE BATTLE OF THE ALLELUIA	199



P R E F A C E.

THESE stories,—a seventh attempt to interest children in Church History,—only differ from their predecessors thus far,—that some of them have already been published in the *Churchman's Companion*, and in America.

The *first* is related at length in the first volume of CRASSET'S *Histoire de l'Eglise du Japon*; and may also be seen in the English translation, (London, 1707) which, like the original French edition, bears the name of the *Abbé de T.*

The *second* is told of more than one mediæval saint; a curious plate representing the miracle may be seen in the *Bavaria Sancta et pia* of Matthew Rader.

The *third* is taken from the *Historia Martyrum Gorcomensium* of Gulielmus Estius ; (Douay, 1603,) but the Dutch names are given more correctly from the edition of De Bellegarde's *Histoire Abrégée de l'Eglise Metropolitaine d'Utrecht*, lately published by my friend the Abbé Karsten, President of the so-called Jansenist College at Amersfort. It was written after a visit to Gorcum.

The *fourth* is a Sussex tradition of the Great Tempest of 1703 ; but put into a locality with which I am familiar.

The *fifth* is little more than the repetition of a story related to me in Portugal.

The *sixth* is told by S. Gregory of Tours.

The *seventh* will be found in the sixth volume (the first of America) of the *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses* (pp. 90—95.)

The *eighth* unites two events, which, though happening in the same persecution, were not simultaneous. The entrance of Lucius is related by Socrates, H. E. iv. 21 : and the miracle

on the possessed man, by the same historian in the next chapter.

- The *ninth* is told by Sozomen, vi. 40; compare Ammianus, xxxi. 12, 13.

The *tenth* is related in the Life of S. Hilarion, (cap. 15,) and, however different in its character from most, must stand or fall with the rest of primitive miracles.

The *eleventh* is narrated by Sozomen and others.

The *twelfth*, by Ven. Bede, Hist. Eccl. i. 14, 15.

These stories are so arranged as to have a reference to some passage in the Epistle, Gospel, or Lesson for the Sundays in Lent; two being assigned to each. They end with Passion Sunday, because the *Followers of the LORD* takes up the series on Palm Sunday, and continues it to Easter Tuesday.

SACKVILLE COLLEGE,

Wednesday in Sexagesima, 1855.

INTRODUCTION.

I COULD take you, if you were with me in the city of Brussels, into a long, narrow, lofty, upper room of the Convent of S. Michael. Round the walls you would see row upon row of folio volumes, rough in their yellow hogskin, clamped and knobbed with wrought iron, and dotted down the face with their well thumbbed finger holes; with their quaint illuminations, and lovely initial letters, and strings of foliage that run down the side of their pages, imbedding them, as it were, in a nest of leaves. All these are the lives or the legends of the Saints of Christendom; brought, at untold expense, from all corners of Europe; office books of different Churches, histories of different orders,

lives of martyrs, and confessors, and virgins : presented to that library by princes, and bishops, and learned men ; thrown, as it were, into a treasury for the glory of the Saints. In the middle of this room is a long kind of counter fitted with drawers on each side, and covered with loose sheets, and manuscripts, and proofs. And in that room, and on that counter four patient monks are at work, toiling on day after day, month after month, and year after year in writing the Acts of the Saints. Two hundred and forty years ago the work was begun ; generation after generation laboured at it through evil report and good report, collected manuscripts, heaped up together twelve thousand printed works, travelled into every nook and corner of Europe, and with pains which you can scarcely understand, published in the course of those years fifty-four folio volumes, and are now at work on the fifty-fifth. He that began this labour was named John Bolland, and from him his successors have been called the Bollandists.

I once spent a Sunday afternoon in this room, in turning over and admiring the treasury

of learning there collected. If the acts of those Saints whom we, with all the Catholic Church, hold in reverence, took such labour to collect, and occupy so vast a space, what fear is there that I, in these little volumes of stories, should not be able to find plenty of fresh matter, to whatever part of Church history I like to turn? I might as well, like the angel-child who, as I have told you, appeared to S. Augustine, think to pour all the waters of the sea into a little hole that I have dug for myself in the sand.

Lent is coming on; and, as I once told you a set of stories for Holy Week, so now I will tell you some that shall have to do with the season that comes before it. Two stories you shall have for each Sunday of the forty days, and they shall explain, as it were, some text in the Lessons, or Epistle, or Gospel of each.

Only remember that there is nothing in the world easier for us both, than for me to tell, and for you to hear, what the Saints did. I wish it were the tenth part as easy to live as they lived. Nevertheless, to be fond of

hearing about them, may, by God's grace, take one step towards the determining to believe in them. If so, I shall be glad to tell you of them, and the hour or two that you spend over my book will be well indeed. Now then, listen, for I am about to begin.

I.

The Siege of Omura.

A.D. 1574.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

“Thou art a place to hide me in ; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble : Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.” Psalm xxxii. 8.

It would be a pleasant thing, on such a bright blue day as this, if I could really take you to the place where I must presently try to make you fancy that you are. And yet, though we might sail along the lovely shores of those Japanese Islands,—though we might see the calm, sunny creeks, with the green waves rippling and dancing at the very foot of the thick forest that skirts them,—we could not land there :¹ for it is death by the laws of Japan for any Christian to be found within those domi-

¹ This story was written in 1853.

nions. One nation only that calls itself so is allowed to enter their cities; and this only by a deed of wickedness which is almost too sad to tell. Before the Dutch merchants are permitted to land, they are forced to trample on a crucifix, in token that they hate the Name and the Faith of the Crucified.

But once those lands were the battle-field of the Church and Satan. The fiercest war that the devil ever carried on against the faith he waged there. For sixty years the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed; for sixty years the patience and courage of the missionaries and the native Christians were tried to the uttermost; and—for the only time of which we read in Church history—in a fair war, and where the faith had once established itself, *Satan prevailed*. This, to me, makes the history of the Japanese martyrs sad and touching beyond any other. Those valiant servants of JESUS CHRIST sought to deliver their land from the Prince of this world,—to cast out idols,—to set up the standard of the Cross; they laid down their

lives for this, *and they failed.* They delivered their own souls; they have sat down at the Marriage Supper of the LAMB; but their country returned to its old darkness, and evil spirits regained their ancient power over it. Whether, even now, as some believe, there are —without churches, without priests, without any open form of religion, in secret and in danger, after two hundred years have gone by —a remnant of Christians in Japan, God only knows.

Why these things were so permitted, we must not be over bold to guess. "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" But one reason I can give you. The missionaries began without Bishops. For many years they had no native Priests. Instead of employing the precious time before the Great Persecution in ordaining Japanese for the villages and country towns, they were content with a few European Priests in the larger cities; all that laboured there were ordained in India or in Europe; they obeyed a Superior, and not a Bishop; and naturally the Christian faith came to be looked on as the

faith of foreigners. And when foreigners were banished, its stay and prop were gone. In short, they fought God's battle most zealously and valiantly; they died by thousands and tens of thousands in His cause; but they did not fight it in God's way: and therefore, in the long run, the blood of the martyrs was not the seed of the Church.

But I must go on with my story. This, that I now tell you, shall be at the time when everything looked brightest for the success of the Gospel; when thousands of converts were being yearly added to the Church; and when none could doubt that, as other lands had been won to CHRIST, so this also would be one of the kingdoms which would shortly call itself by His Name. Hereafter, perhaps, I may tell you another story of the last brave struggle the Church made for Japan.

A sea-girt fortress on a steep crag. A wild November night. Sentinels posted round the walls. Resin torches flaring and flashing in the fitful gusts from the bay of Omura. Far, far below, indistinctly seen through haze and damp, the camp fires of a great army. On the

wall, gazing thitherward, a noble-looking man, scarcely past the prime of youth, wrapped in a rough cloak, but wearing beneath it (if we could see them) the silken robes of a Japanese king; at his side an European Priest, some fifty years of age in reality, but so worn by cares and troubles, that you might have taken him for sixty. Let us listen to what they are saying.

"It is a singular honour," said Father Luis de Proes, "that God has bestowed on your Majesty, in calling you to be the first Christian King of Japan. And where He gives grace, there also He calls His servants to trial. Wherefore I am nothing astonished at this rebellion, and the present danger. They can only end in one of two ways: either your Majesty will obtain a glorious victory over your enemies, or a more glorious martyrdom at their hands. Either you will rule peacefully in Omura, or reign triumphantly in the kingdom of heaven."

"I thank you, good father, I thank you," replied King Bartholomew; "and I believe that, one way or the other, your words will be

fulfilled. Victory here, I own, I do not expect. What can twelve gentlemen, and some forty soldiers, do against twenty thousand,—for so many I certainly hear that the enemy can muster?”

“Take heed, my son, that you shorten not the LORD’s Arm. I say not that He will deliver you in this world; but I say that He can as easily give that multitude into your hands, as He did the Philistines to the sword of Jonathan and his armour-bearer. Do not let our faithlessness stand in His way; remember that ‘He could do no mighty works there, because of their unbelief.’”

“I believe in His power, my father, and I will not doubt His will. And though I am persuaded that to depart and to be with Him is far better, yet all that I can do to hold out this fortress I will do; seeing that, if we fall, His faith also must fall, for a time at least, in this kingdom.”

“It is well said,” answered Father Froes. “He keep your Majesty in that mind!—But here, as I think, is a messenger, and he seems in speed.”

"It is Xatadono," said the King. "Well, my lord, what tidings?"

"May it please your Majesty," said the bluff old nobleman, "I know not; but some. Here is a messenger from the city just arrived, at the hazard of his life: he will only give his news to your Majesty."

"Bid him come here, and come yourself, my lord.—Well, father, now we shall know something."

"Is it your will, sire, that I remain?" inquired the Priest.

"Surely it is," replied King Bartholomew; "we may need your counsel. Here they come.—Good friend," he continued, as the messenger, after the Japanese fashion, threw himself on the ground, "whatever your news are, we are beholden to you for bringing them; and if God spares us, we will not remain in your debt. Now, are they good or bad?"

"Bad, my liege," said the man. "Isafay will advance with all his army to-morrow, to storm the fort; and they have certain tidings that the King of Firando sails with sixty vessels at the break of day. If it were not for him, &c.

strong party in the city would endeavour to assist your Majesty ; but as it is, they dare not. The wind is fair for him, though somewhat high ; and with such odds, they might destroy themselves, they say, but could not advantage you."

"I shall hold out this fort, with such forces as I have, to the very last," replied the King : "if man will not help me, it may be that God will. In the mean time, wear this jewel, either in remembrance of me, or in pledge that I will do greater things for you. And, if it be possible, I would fain have you do an errand for me to the city."

"If it costs me my life, I will," said the messenger.

"Well, then," replied King Bartholomew, "if by any means help should be forthcoming, let me have a sign. Ximadono's house can be seen from here ; let a red flag be run up to the highest turret."

"I will see to it myself," answered the man ; "and I doubt not that, if the fleet of Firando should not appear, or if the wind should change, your Majesty's friends will attempt a sally."

"Go, then," returned the King, "and God speed you !"

Now come into the castle itself. The Queen is with the ladies of her bed-chamber,—so say the lords that are waiting in the great hall: they are resolving what to do, and have sent for the King to meet them here. King Bartholomew and Father Froes enter; and almost at the same moment the silk hangings at the upper end of the hall are drawn back by a page, and Queen Maria, and five or six of her ladies, advance into the midst. She is past the prime of her beauty, but still very lovely; her hair hangs in plaits, after the fashion of her country, with strings of pearl intermixed, and her costume is somewhat simpler than when she was yet a heathen; for she does not now wear above eight dresses of silk, instead of the fifteen or twenty that once she would have thought necessary to her state.

"My lord and husband," she said, "and you, my good lords, since it has happened that so many of us weak women have been shut up together with you to share your protection, it is but right that we should do what we can to

share your danger. As you all know, there are nearly fifty of us; and if you will provide each with a soldier's cloak and a pike, and place us round the walls, it is not possible but that the enemy should take us for real soldiers, and we shall thus make a show of more than double the strength we really have."

"The women put us to shame," said the old Lord Xatadono.

"It is an excellent thought," cried the King.

"Surely," said Father Froes, "it is a sign that God, thus putting it into our minds to help ourselves, is about, in His own good time, to help us Himself."

"It were well," said the Queen, "that we were in our posts in the grey of the morning, lest anything should discover our disguise."

And then followed a long discussion between the noblemen, where these new sentinels were to be set—how they could be so set as to make most show—how they should best dispose the real soldiers, and where they could offer the stoutest defence. Let us pass over some hours.

The sun is rising over Japan. His earliest rays are glowing on the Pacific, as it roars and

foams round the eastern cape of Yeso ; but as they glide along over fertile valleys, and pathless forests, and straight canals, and mountains on which the autumn snow is already lying, they light up many a temple of Amida or Kaca, they fall on many a convent—if I may so call it—of Bonzes, but here and there also, far apart, they light on some Christian Church, and on the little congregation that are going up to its services. Now they are glittering on the strait of Bungo, and the Swounada Sea ; and now they are lighting up Omura, and its rock fortress, and its city, and its rebel army.

Look ! far above us the fort crowns a steep crag. You may see its turrets, and bastions, and central castle. From the highest battlement waves a flag, carrying a red Cross on a black ground ; for black is here the sign of joy and triumph. On all sides but one, sharp, needle-like rocks defend the little garrison ; scarred and seamed with rifts and clefts, they catch the sun on their rugged sides, or open into the ink-like blackness of some mountain chasm or cavern. Towards the city only is there a passage from the fortress. It winds

like a serpent between high rock-walls, zig-zagged, and scarped ; so steep, that steps run the whole way ; so deep, that, as yet, it is in black shade. On the walls of the castle are forty or fifty sentinels, in their grey soldier-cloaks, and bearing everyone his pike, as they pace backwards and forwards, each on his own beat. To the south, in the open country, are the tents of the rebels. The city itself is still and lifeless ; men are afraid to go forth from their houses ; none can tell on which side his neighbour stands ; there is fear, and doubt, and suspicion everywhere. But from many a roof and upper window the citizens look forth to the sea ; for there, bounding before a north-western wind, are the sixty sail of the King of Firando, as they proudly bear onwards to the harbour. From an advanced post of the army of the rebels rises the idol standard of the Dragon, a sign that Isafay is there himself.

“ We have them now, for certain,” said the rebel chief, a tall, fierce-looking man, in complete armour, as he stood at the foot of the standard, and pointed towards the sea. “ Sumitanda, whom the Christians call Bartholomew,

is weeping for his folly by this time ; but it is too late."

"Ay," said an old reverend Bonze that stood by him, with hair and beard as white as driven snow. "So mighty is Amida to avenge himself and his servants !"

"It is almost the hour," cried Isafay. "I would fain have assisted in storming the castle myself ; but if better may not be, let the picked body advance."

"The passage is so narrow, my lord," said one of the generals, "that two thousand are as good as twenty thousand to force it. If the first detachment be driven back, which will scarcely be, we must advance another and another, till we wear out yonder Christian fools. For my part, I could have sworn that there were not so many soldiers in the castle as I see on the walls ; but, to do him justice, Sumitanda is no mean general, and will make the most of what he has."

"I hate him," cried Isafay. "I hate him, and his faith, and his Portuguese Bonzes. If I can but take him alive !—"

As he spoke, drums beat and trumpets blew ;

and the detachment marched from the camp. Of the two thousand men, the greater part were armed with pikes, some with bows and arrows; and there were about one hundred and fifty musketeers, accoutred in the European fashion of the day, bearing short match-lock muskets; and twenty that carried long wheel-lock guns, with rests, on which to lean them while taking aim.

It seems indeed hopeless for the Christians. The fleet of Firando has already its hulls above water; the Great Dragon can be made out at the mast-head of the royal ship; two thousand picked soldiers are in full march to the fortress; there are eighteen thousand in reserve;—and against these, King Bartholomew can array twelve noblemen, and forty-two common soldiers. Still, if they have all odds of numbers against them, they have all odds of position on their side. There are four sharp zig-zags between the plain and the gate of the castle. Along the top of the rocky walls of the two lower ones, they have piled heaps of stones, for ammunition is too precious to be used there; but at the top of the fourth

zigzag, where the real fight will be, they have formed loop-holes for muskets, and have piled together every heavy article that the castle affords. Here, too, are beams fastened with chains, so that they may thunder down on the heads of the besiegers, and be pulled up again. At present, five or six soldiers alone are at the zigzags; the rest are in the great hall.

There they stand, nobles and soldiers together; the ladies of the court at a little distance, and about the Queen. One may almost tell which are Christian and which are heathen, from their very expression. The Christians, if they look grave and saddened, look also trustful and hopeful; the heathens like brave men who have made up their minds to the worst, and who think that the sooner it is over the better.

Father Froes first speaks. He tells them of the Crown laid up for such a fight for the truth to the death; he congratulates them that God's glory must now be manifested, either by them or for them,—for them if they conquer, by them if they die. The women he

reminds of the martyrdoms of earlier times,—of S. Agnes, of S. Lucy, of S. Agatha ; he bids them remember that God was pleased to choose a woman to be Protomartyr of Japan ; that, though this glory was beyond them, yet still they might have the honour of being the first of high rank that suffered for the Name of CHRIST. “ And let no man think,” he continued, “ that you will be martyrs the less because you fall with arms in your hands. True—it is the part of Christians to suffer, rather than to resist ; and, under other circumstances, I would gladly lead you forth myself to the enemy’s camp, to receive from him a speedy passage to the kingdom of heaven. But God has given us this strong place ; if we can hold out, forces will come in from other parts of the kingdom, the rebels will be driven off, the King will again reign in peace, and the Church will be in prosperity. If we surrender, our king, no doubt, will receive an incorruptible for a corruptible crown ; but Satan will triumph, the churches will be thrown down, a bitter persecution will begin, and thousands of souls may perish that our holding out might

have saved. I well believe that it is His will to preserve us ; let us trust in Him."

"Why does He not give us a sign, then?" asked Cunadono, a young heathen nobleman.

"We are not to tie Him down to our own wishes, my lord," said Father Froes ; "He could give us a sign this very moment, if He so willed, and—"

As he spoke, a loud, heavy, creaking sound was heard ; and at the same moment a huge iron weathercock, that rose in sight of the hall windows, swung completely round.

"He has ! He has !" cried Xatadono ; "He has given us a sign ! If the wind keeps but in that quarter, no fleet can enter the harbour from Firando."

King Bartholomew, with one or two others, left the hall, and stood on the battlements. The fleet, but a few minutes before bearing onwards so gallantly, was tacking, or taking in sail ; while to the south-west, a heavy, copper-like glow in the horizon seemed to prophesy a storm from that quarter.

"Father," said Cunadono, when the news was reported, and when quiet was a little re-

stored "will you give me Baptism before the attack?"

"My son," said Father Froes, after a pause, "it is only after long preparation that, for the most part, we think meet to bestow the gift of God; nevertheless, as His Arm has been now so signally stretched out, so I may believe that it is His grace which has put this desire into your heart; and what am I, that I should resist Him? Therefore, and considering the danger of this day, if you can give me proof that you know somewhat of our most holy faith, I am ready to baptize you on the instant."


"May it please your Majesty," said an officer, entering the hall, "the rebels are advancing; we can see them plainly from Xaca's tower."

"Then," said King Bartholomew, "every one to his post. Cunadono, as soon as you have received Baptism, we shall look for you near us. If we should not meet again here, my last exhortation is to stand firm, whatever may happen. Then the rebels cannot hinder our meeting in a better kingdom."

It could matter very little for those that so parted how they met: whether they returned with victory, or went from the battle field to the kingdom of Heaven. Father Froes had baptized Cunadono hastily, as the time required, and Bernard, for that was now his name, went with a light heart to the King. The father remained in prayer in the castle chapel. He had given orders that the wounded should be brought there; where he might afford them such help as they needed, for he himself would take no part in the fight.

It drew towards ten o'clock. For the last half hour, all had been growing more and more still. The soldier's step no more crossed the Court. There was no echo in the distant passages; there was no word of command; there was no shrill note of question or answer. Deep, dead silence had fallen upon all things. The chapel grew dark as well as silent. It might have been a quiet evening in the midst of a lonely, solemn wood.

Suddenly, a loud shout,—a crashing noise, a cheer, and shrieks of anguish. The father knew what it was. The rebels had made a



rush at the first zigzag, and the Christians were rolling down the rocks upon them. Sometimes louder, sometimes lower the battle raged ; still, not a sound in the castle itself ; still, not a foot crossed the Court ; still the good father poured out his soul in prayer to the LORD GOD of Hosts. There he was, alone. But he believed in the Communion of Saints. He knew that many and many a prayer in Europe would be heard for him ; he knew that those who had never even known of the Island of Kiousiou and the kingdom of Omura might yet be interceding for him, and he felt calmed and strengthened for the issue.

True. And Lancelot Andrewes, when he at that time (it was night in England) was kneeling in his quiet rooms in Pembroke Hall, little thought of the battle raging round the fortress rock of Omura ; and yet his prayer, that he has left us—"O Succourer of those that are without succour ; O Helper in extremity, remember all those that are in extreme necessity and need Thy succour ; and scatter Thou the people that delight in war,"—perhaps came up with acceptance before the

mercy-seat of God, and helped to turn the scale of battle in far distant Japan.

About twelve, there was a pause. Suddenly, a dropping fire of musketry: shouts wilder and fiercer: shrieks more terrible; the crashing of rocks and beams louder and heavier. Wondering that he had heard nothing of the wounded, Father Froes rose from his knees, and passing along the battlements, advanced to the post of attack. The sky was black and lowering: a lurid gleam of the sun touched the city of Omura, and brought out into strong relief one red flag that fluttered from the roof of a tall house.

"God be praised!—that must be the signal!" he cried; and he hurried on still faster.

A terrible scene. The steps of the last zigzag, slippery with blood, choked by a struggling and writhing mass of men,—some endeavouring to batter in the great gate with a beam,—some hopelessly firing up at the defenders on each side of the rock passage,—some dragging themselves, like wounded worms, out of the heat of the battle,—crushing each other, and crushed by the

ponderous stones rolled down, or picked off by the marksmen that lined the rock. The defenders stooped or knelt, and fired as fast as their guns could be given them. Some of the ladies of the Court loaded, and some used their utmost strength in rolling stones to the edge, and hurling them over. Wonderful indeed to see Christian women and Christian girls so fighting for the Cross : wonderful to see delicate hands nerved for such work : wonderful that gentle hearts should be so steeled by the cause for which they were contending : each effort on their part answered by a cry of agony from below,—as the sea of battle swayed backwards and forwards, and dashed against the jaws of the passage.

“I fear it is hopeless, good Father,” said King Bartholomew, in a low voice, and grasping the Priest’s hand as with a vice. “The ammunition is all but at an end—and the pieces of rock are almost used up.”

It was so indeed. They were bringing the furniture of the palace as a last resource : chairs and tables of precious woods, jars and vessels, vases and baths—everything that could be

carried, any thing that might crush. And for those below, as one of our poets says :

“ Some preciously by shattered porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.”

“ God has sent you help !” said Father Froes. “ The red flag is up.” And almost at the same moment there rose a cry among the soldiers—“ A sally from the town ! A sally from the town !”

The besiegers also saw and heard. Without asking or thinking how many the assailants might be, they rushed down the zigzag, exposed, as they went, to the very last shots that the Christians had powder to fire.

Isafay had watched the contest from the spot where he had at first stood. He had seen the first three zigzags won with comparative ease ; and then he chafed, as half hour after half hour went by, and still the battle raged round the fourth. He was on the point of ordering another body of troops and hastening to the attack, when the Bonze cried,

“ By Amida, they are flying !”

Man over man, they came rushing down the

steep rock ; and even where the rebel chief stood, the shrieks of the hindmost rang in his ear.

"Ride," he said, "Chicatrere, and order the next detachment to advance. I head them myself."

The word was given. The men were hastily formed, when just as the order came to advance, the trumpets of the town's forces were heard, and the head of the pikes were seen over the hill. At the same moment, the foremost of the flyers came up.

"Fly !" they shrieked ! "Fly ! A sally ! A sally !"

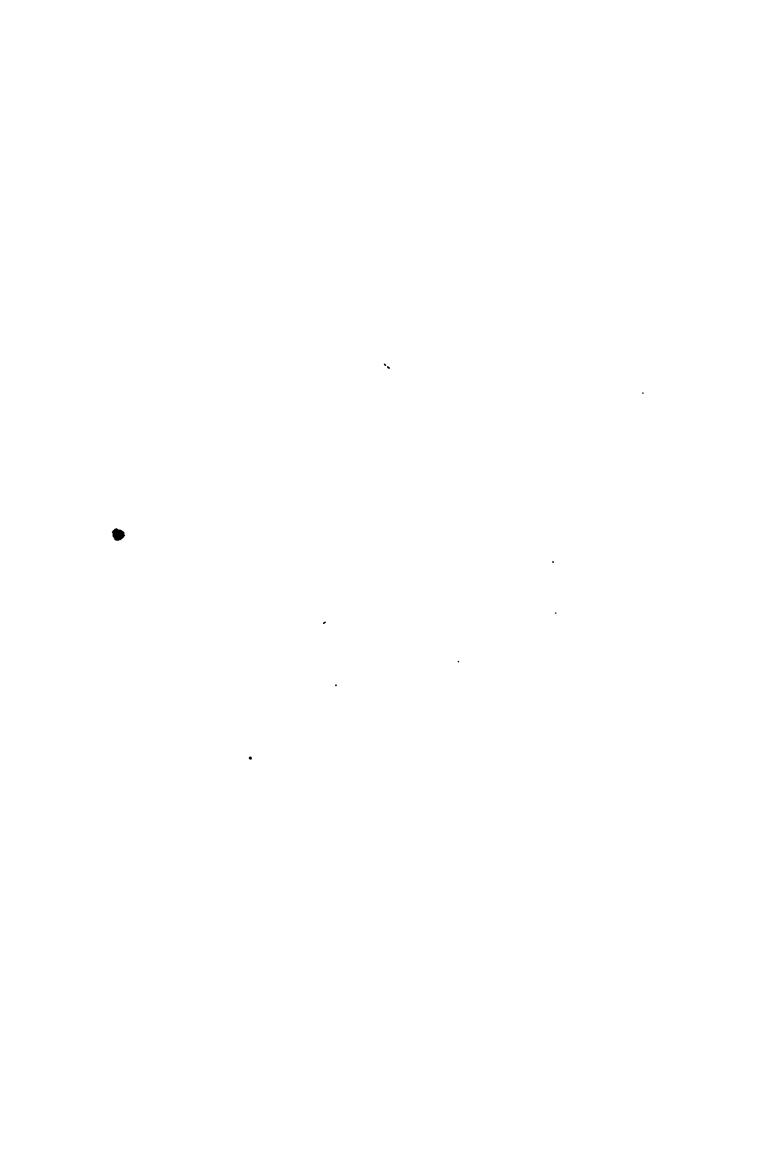
The long lines wavered.

"The gods fight for us !" cried the Bonze. "Amida himself will lead you to victory ! Forward !"

As he spoke, such a peal of thunder bel-
lowed forth from the overcharged clouds, that
it seemed as if the earth must be cloven
asunder. A long pale blue ray of lightning
streamed down on the spot. Men closed their
eyes in dismay ; and when they opened them,
the blackened body of the Bonze lay lifeless
on the ground.

Then all was confusion. Isafay was borne along in the rout. King Bartholomew joined the troop from Omura. They mustered only two thousand: but the rebels thought not of numbers. It was not a battle, but a slaughter. And when the sun set, the army was dispersed to the four winds. Isafay was dead, and the fleet of Firando was dashing on its own shores.

And thus it was that the True Faith took deeper root in Omura, and after bore fruit an hundred fold.



II.

The Wolf of the Spessart Wald.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

“Deliver the children appointed unto death.”—Psalm cii. 20.

THERE stood a lone cottage some two hundred yards from the village of Rienek, in Bavaria. A lane went winding up from the church to the Spessart Wald, now pleasantly overshadowed by elms and limes, now ploughing, as it were, its passage between steep sandstone rocks, then mounting, by a slow and zigzag course, the spur of the outlying hills. Close at hand was one of the huge Franconian forests: straggling copses, like its outposts, were dotted here and there among the upland farms; and in the long winter nights, the baying of the wolves, as they scoured the country, made the

sturdy yeoman look well to his cross-bow, and the child cling closer to her mother. Old men used to tell, as they sat round the fire, of the harm those beasts had done in former times, before the country was so well inhabited;—how packs had sometimes entered the village; how a grey old wolf was once shot at the foot of the churchyard cross; how, in very cold seasons, they had gnawed the bottom of cottage doors to get in. But nobody believed that such things would happen now: even in the Spessart Wald itself the village girls were not afraid to go a Maying, as far as the Margrave's Yew; for it was held that from S. Mark's day to S. Luke's the wolves would do no harm.

Well; in this cottage there lived a good yeoman, by name Hans Kempten. But he was now gone up to the Kreutzberg, many miles away, on business for the Lord of Rienek; and his wife Meta was left at home. Some thought it a lonely place for her and for her baby in the long February nights; but she used to laugh, and to say that she was as safe in her cottage as she would be in her lord's

hall; and what with her baby, and her spinning-wheel, and her goats, she found the day too short for all that she had to do.

It fell out, on an afternoon in the middle of February, that she had to go into the village for some flour. Little Trudchen, the granddaughter of Old Peter the Sexton, was to watch by the baby. "Look!" said Meta; "the sun is a good hour above the horizon,—there,—right over Dettingen hill. I will be home, and so shall you too, long before it sets."

So saying, she went out. The ground was crisp with a light frost; but the brown leaves of the birch were falling quietly around, and making way for the glad greenness of the coming Spring. Here and there, in sheltered nooks, the snowdrop was beginning to peep forth, though ten days before, all the gardens in Rienek could scarce furnish one for Candlemas. A bright, calm afternoon: a long, pale, cloudless track of glory under the sun: to the east, a frosty greyness, that spoke of a sharp night.

A little way above the cottage was a thicket

of furze, and brambles, and bushes. There, children used to gather the finest blackberries in autumn; there, even in January, on a sunny day, you might catch the golden glow of the furze blossom. Now in this thicket there lay hid a strong, fierce, black wolf. He was very well known in the upland farms for one of the boldest and most cunning that had been seen for many seasons. More than once the young men had given him chase; but still, night after night, he was prowling round this fold, or that shed. About Michaelmas he carried off a sheep from Hendrick Schorndorf's farm; and only on Hilary Eve, young Kehl, the best marksman in the Spessart Wald, took off a good piece of his right ear by a quarrel from his cross-bow. The weather had been cruelly cold; and that, I suppose, now drove him down to the village.

Trudchen went on rocking the cradle, and singing quietly to the baby. A pretty picture she would have made, as she sat on the three-legged stool near the chimney corner; and the great, grinning monsters of the fire-dogs contrasted well with her soft, flaxen hair, and blue

eye, and little merry face, then prim and important with the charge laid upon her. Ten minutes went by, and the baby still slept, when there was a rattling of the iron ring that served as the door-handle.

"Come in!" said Trudchen.

But nothing answered. "Well," she said, "I declare I thought some one was there. It feels quite lonely, somehow. I wish Meta Kempten were back." And presently she began singing to herself an old Franconian song.

In a minute, the door-ring rattled louder than before. "Come in!" said Trudchen, again; and she knew not why, but her voice trembled.

Then all was quiet again. Presently after, some one pushed against the door, and finding it latched, rattled the handle furiously. For wolves have more cunning than even foxes; and the woodmen tell you strange tales of their devices to come at their prey.

"How silly am I!" said little Trudchen; "I will let him in, whoever it is. Perhaps some neighbour wants something." So she got up and went to the door.

In the mean time, Meta—she was but a girl herself—had done her errand, and was returning. The shadows were getting long; and old Peter turned into the churchyard as she passed it, to ring Angelus. “I shall have time,” thought Meta, as she also entered. Here and there two or three wooden crosses raised themselves above the turf: one parish Priest rested well under a cross of grey stone. Wreaths, now brown and withered, had been strewn over the freshest graves: the snow lay in patches on the north side of every little mound, and the windows blazed gloriously on the southern side of the church. It was just the time and the scene for the place that holds—as a great German poet tells us—the seed sown by God, to ripen in the Day of Sheaves. A quaint old church, too, it was;—an enormous roof; a tall, slim western tower, with a gabled head; and a circular-ended chancel, simple and massy. Men *did* say that S. Virgil of Salzburg had consecrated this church, when he was in those parts.

Meta made the sign of the Cross, and entered and knelt. A venerable old man was

there: he also had been kneeling; but now he had risen, and was talking to a rosy-cheeked boy who stood by. Men called him the good Bishop Burchard then; the Church now honours him as S. Burchardus of Wurzburg.

"That will be a sweeter Angelus than this," said the old man, "that rings us out of this world, if we have done our duty in it. Come to me up at your lord's to-morrow, after mass, and we will talk further.

He had scarcely spoken, when two or three shrieks were heard in the village. Nearer and nearer they came—there was the confusion of many voices. "Meta!"—"Meta Kempten!"—"Where is she?"—"I think she went to the church!"—"Our Lady have pity upon her!" As soon as she heard her name, Meta sprang to the porch door; and the Bishop pressed thither also. There, foremost of the group, was Trudchen, her eyes starting from her head with fear, and in an agony of sobbing,—old Peter holding her in his arms,—the strong village blacksmith, as pale as the ashes under his own anvil,—the miller talking rapidly,—two or three women asking questions,—and no one answering.

"What is it?" cried Meta.

"The wolf! the wolf!" gasped the child.

"Oh, neighbour Kempten!" said one of the women.

"For mercy's sake, what is it?" shrieked the poor mother.

"It is God's Will," said the blacksmith, softly.

"*You* tell her! *you* tell her!" cried one or two.

"I *will* tell her," he said. "Neighbour Meta, God gave, and God has taken away. A wolf has carried off the baby."

Meta gave one long shriek, and the women ran up to her. Then, of course rose a hubbub of useless advice. "Run for cross-bows!" cried one.

"Call out the Baron's wolf-hounds!" said another.

"Track him with young Kehl's sleuth hound," shouted a third.

"Peace, my children, peace!" said S. Burchardus, coming forward. "My daughter, go with me into the church; I pray the rest to stand without. Now," he said, "my daughter, kneel and pray in faith: the LORD

That delivered David from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, can save your child from the wolf."

It was impossible to look at that Bishop, without catching faith from his words. He cast himself on his knees, and prayed earnestly.

A low, suppressed shout from without. Many voices speaking together. Many feet entering the church. Meta turned, and there by her side stood the wolf. He had carried the baby by its dress, and now laid it at her feet.

Safe, and smiling, and happy, it is in Meta's arms. The rest gazed in wonder at the great miracle. But the mother's sobs, and the low voices of the women that surrounded her, were all that broke the silence, till the Bishop rose. He had looked round, had seen his prayer answered, and had continued to kneel in thanksgiving, as he had begun to kneel in intercession.

"Seems this so wonderful?" he said, as Meta fell at his feet. "Rise, my daughter, rise. What, have ye never heard of the miracles of former times? or did ye think that the

LORD'S Arm was shortened? Nay, my son," as a woodman entered with a strong cross-bow, "that beast hath obeyed God's command; and unharmed he shall go hence, even as unharmed he brought the child hither."

III.

The Martyrs of Gorcum.

JULY 8TH, 1572.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

"I, even I, am He That comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass ?

"The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail." Isaiah li. 12, 14.

It was on a stormy afternoon in October that I came down to the bank of the sluggish Meuse, and waited for the ferry that was to carry me over. To the left the river widened and widened, each bank scarcely rising above the level of the water, and traced out by the lines of poplars then in the full gold of their autumnal tints. Immediately in front, busy and bustling with its quays, and wharves, and

windmills, rose the little town of Gorcum,—for so men have contracted it from its more proper name of Gorinchem. High above its houses and fortifications rose the huge massy brick tower of its Church; answered as it were on the opposite side of the stream by the more shapely steeple of Workum. The river itself, dark and gloomy, was chafed into little waves by a biting westerly wind; the inklike clouds, drifting up from the German Ocean, seemed to chase each other across the sky, and promised a storm before I could reach Utrecht. As I leant back in the boat, while we tacked and retacked in making for the landing place on the opposite bank, I thought of the history that has made Gorcum a household word in the annals of the Church, and resolved that when my wanderings should be over, I would tell it you as another among the innumerable triumphs of the Cross.

Up and down through the streets and lanes of the city I wandered, picturesque as all Dutch towns are, with the rows of trees that skirt the canal, the *stepped* gables, relics of the Spanish domination, the little mirror project-

ing from the window of every second story, the great gaping faces that mark the chemists' shops, the brazen basins that show where the barbers live, the bright metal pails in which they were already beginning to carry out the milk, the horses in their pattens, the draw-bridges connecting the various parts of the town, the deserted storks' nests carefully kept up in the hope that the *oyevaar* would be tempted to return thither next spring. It was Saturday; and a grand *schoonmaken*—as they say in Holland—was going on in every street and alley, till house-fronts, pavements, and windows, had attained that elaborate degree of cleanness without which a Dutchman could not live. But all these things I had seen before, and hope to see again; what I wished to visit here was the place where the martyrs of whom I am going to tell you were arrested, were dragged through the streets, and were embarked for execution. This I had time to accomplish while my companions were dining at the *Rode Leeuw*; and while our ponderous diligence was rolling on northwards, and the tall tower of the Dom Kerk at Utrecht, rose

higher and higher above the horizon, I had leisure to fancy that scene as it must have been, and as I am going to describe it.

A warm summer night.—The open windows of the commandant's house in the citadel of Gorcum admit the air, perfumed with the hay over which it has passed, into a large room crowded with an assembly of soldiers, ecclesiastics, and citizens. Around the long table which occupies the centre of the apartment a council of war—if anything so informal may be called by that title—is being held. At its head stands the commandant himself, a tall, dark, Spanish officer; the light of the lamp which is flaring on the table falls on his expressive face, peaked beard, and standing ruff, with an effect that you will understand if you ever saw the famous picture of "Relieving Guard." Crowding around him on his right and on his left are the lieutenants and other officers; toward the lower end of the table the principal soldiers of the garrison. A little apart stands an officer, completely armed, and wearing round his neck the little wooden platter that marks him out as one of the *Gueux*,

the faction of William of Orange, then in arms against Philip II. of Spain, and sworn to effect the independence of the Seven United Provinces.

"And so, sir," said the commandant, "your commander pledges us his word of honour that if the citadel be surrendered, all those who are at present within its walls shall be unharmed in person and in goods, and shall have the liberty of retiring to whatever place they may choose."

"Such are the terms," replied the envoy, "that are offered you by Colonel Brand. I need scarcely tell you that if they are rejected now they will not be repeated. You must be aware that we have a sufficient force to insure our being in possession of the citadel within the next four and twenty hours. You saw the ease with which we carried the town in the morning; and my mission here is only owing to the strict orders which my commanding officer has received from his highness the stadtholder to take the place with as little effusion of blood as may be."

"If the matter lay in my own choice," said

the commandant, "I would fight it out to the last. We know that help is near, and it may be nearer than either you or I think. But as you partly may see, I am overborne by my fellow officers. You declare, however, in the most express terms, and on your honour as a gentleman and a soldier, that the ecclesiastics now within the citadel shall be as safe and as respectfully treated as the seculars? The experience we have had of your Calvinistic soldiery in other instances renders it necessary that we should both be explicit, I in exacting, and you in giving this pledge."

"I am ready," replied the envoy, "not only to declare it on my honour, but to swear to it. And though I acknowledge no authority in any of the persons now assembled in this room, I am willing to take the oath in your presence, and thereby to remove all reasonable ground of apprehension." And he did so.


And so it came to pass that, when morning dawned, the lion of the United Provinces, with its motto *Luctor et emergo*, was floating above the battlements of the citadel of Gorcum.

Let two days have passed by.

In the most noisome of the castle dungeons, crowded together like sheep, debarred from light and almost from air, are the nineteen ecclesiastics, for whose good treatment Marin Brand, the commander of the Prince of Orange's forces, had sworn to be responsible. Eleven of these were Franciscans of the Convent of Gorcum, nine priests and two lay brothers. The other eight were priests, two of them Leonard Vechel and Nicholas Van Poppelen being pastors of the place. He that stood foremost in encouraging his brethren, and took the lead in this holy warfare, was Nicholas Piek, guardian of the Franciscan House, and his vicar Jerome Van Weerd, who was scarcely inferior to him in courage and zeal.

It was Friday. All day long the prisoners had been unvisited by their jailors; faint and worn out with the fatigues of the two last days, they had tasted no food since the preceding evening. They knew nothing of what had passed, except that laughing at the simplicity of the besieged in trusting to his oath, Marin Brand had given immediate orders that they

should be thrust into the dungeon; and had assured them that so far as depended on his influence, they might rest secure of being hung. I am not telling you of the earlier and brighter times of the Church. The outbreak of Calvinism came down upon the Church of Holland at a season when she was but ill prepared for the attack; when deep sleep had fallen on her dignitaries; when her monks were careless and relaxed; when too many of her secular priests cared more for the pleasures of this world than for the service of God; and when riches and temporal honour had corrupted and defiled a communion that had once been the mother of many saints. It is not wonderful, therefore, that during the course of that dreadful day, weary and faint as they were, in uncertainty whether they might not at any moment be called to a violent death, acquainted with the horrible cruelties which had been practised by the Reformed on Roman Catholic ecclesiastics, hearing at intervals the shouts of an infuriated soldiery, and aware when it was too late that the promises of their captors were broken reeds, some of this little company should have lost



courage. It was all that Nicholas Piek could do to retain some of those with whom he was finally successful. Half, at least, at first, lost heart; and he with his vicar and the two pastors of Gorcum were fully employed in animating and cheering the feeble-minded. I do not so much wonder that a lay brother of the convent,—a novice who was but eighteen,—professed his inability to endure the trial that awaited him. One of the other lay brethren followed his example. But very early in the day two of the canons of the great Church began to show signs of wavering. They spoke about the possibility of equivocating with their captors. “We hold,” said they, “the Catholic faith in our hearts; we always shall hold it; but what harm now, and for a day or two, to profess a willingness to listen to what the heretics can say, if thereby we can obtain a chance of escape?”

“I think,” said the lay brother, “that thus to act is not only lawful but clearly our duty. The Church will want the services of all her sons; if we sacrifice ourselves here we throw away our lives for nothing; if we preserve them

by a pretended submission we may do good service in the time to come."

"For nothing!" replied Nicholas Piek. "Do you call this nothing, to die for the faith, to follow the example of so many martyrs, to leave names behind us that shall encourage God's servants in other ages, as those in past times encourage us here! Nothing! Then it was for nothing that all the martyrs died, that all the confessors suffered, that the Church has commemorated them day after day, and century after century. Why, they might have retained the faith in their hearts, provided they did but deny it with their lips. Whosoever shall deny Me before *men*,—mark you, not in your hearts,—him will I also deny before My FATHER which is in heaven. Answer me that, canon, if you can."

"Well," said the canon, "perhaps after all they may not push matters so far."

"And but for the weakness of our faith," said the pastor Vechel, "I wish that they would proceed against us to the very utmost."

"But," asked the young novice, "is it not written, When I bow down myself in the house

of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing?"

"Truly, brother," said the guardian, "I never yet found that Satan was unprovided with a text of Scripture to carry a point. But is it fit that what a scarcely converted heathen asked permission to do, and that permission, for aught I know, not granted, should be set as a pattern to us who ought to stand in the very fore-front of the battle, who ought to encourage others, not to need encouragement ourselves? God forbid!"

So they went on reasoning; Piek and his brave companions sometimes hoping that they had won the whole of that little company to stand firm, sometimes fearing that as much as a third part of it would waver. The day wore away, a day chequered with hopes and fears. I remember once on a sunny morning in February sitting under a high bank of rocks that sheltered me from the easterly breeze, and at whose feet the early primroses were venturing to peep out, and watching the cloud shadows as they chased each other over the distant woods and the green hills closer at hand, and the farm

busy with its spring occupations. You could scarcely say that the hill was in sunshine before the shade fell upon it; and the shade had scarcely settled on its tender green grass when there came a brighter gleam than before, and all was smiling again. I never saw the shadows pass so quickly as they did on that day. Something of the same kind was the case with the faith of Father Piek and his companions, as they noticed the alternate wavering and steadfastness of those whom they were trying to encourage.

It had grown dusk when steps were heard in the passage that led to the dungeon, the bolts were drawn back, the door opened, and at the same moment a savoury smell penetrated every part of the chamber.

"Good evening, sirs," said a short stout man who made his appearance, followed by the jailor and several of his officials. It was Captain Aumale, an apostate canon of Liège, now high in the favour of Marin Brand, and of Marin Brand's master the Prince of Orange. "Here is some supper for you, which doubtless after your long fast you will be glad to partake

of. Set it down, jailor. If these blinded Papists will not eat good Protestant meat because it is Friday, so much the worse for themselves and the better for those that will have it instead."

"I pray you, my brethren," said Piek to the others, "not to touch the food. I know very well,—there is none among us who does not know, that we being thus prisoners and debarred from all other meat are by that very fact released from the obligation of fasting; nevertheless, as this poor apostate sets it before us in hatred and contempt of the Church, my sentence is that we touch none of it. Better were it that we should starve, if needs be, than thus give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. How say you, my brethren?"

There was a general exclamation of assent. Even the canon of Gorcum said, "I, for one, will have none of it."

"You shall pay dearly for this," cried Aumale. "You are all to be sent to Brielle, and there you will be hung as surely as I am a captain in his highness's army."

"No offence, sir, to you—" began the canon.

"No offence!" shouted Aumale. "The greatest offence, sir. You are throwing back my kindness in my face; depend upon it my commanding officer shall hear of this. Take away the dishes, jailor, and let some of the men at the guard house have them."

Just as that functionary was about to do so, the door again opened, and a tall, thin, demure looking personage, wearing a Spanish cloak and a steeple hat, entered the chamber, bearing a parchment in his hand.

"Which of you," he inquired, "is Master Nicholas Piek?"

"I am," replied the priest, stepping forward.

"Then this paper much concerns you," said the notary, for such he was. "Stay, I will read it. 'Know all men, by these presents, that for certain sufficient reasons, and especially for that intercession has been made on his behalf by some well-disposed persons of his highness's side, my will is, that Nicholas Piek, formerly guardian of the Franciscan Convent in this town of Gorcum, be set at liberty, on condition that he, the said Nicholas, betake

himself instantly to Bois le Duc, or to whatever post nearest to this place the Spanish troops may occupy. As witness my hand this 2nd day of July, 1591. LUMEX.'

"I can assure you, sir," continued the notary, "that your friends had hard work to persuade General Lumey to sign the paper; and you had better use it at once, lest the permission should be retracted." Lumey was the officer commanding that part of the Dutch army which was then guarding the mouth of the Meuse, and from which the detachment under Marin Brand had been despatched for the capture of Gorcum.

"Am I to understand by the wording of this paper," inquired Piek, "that, if I avail myself of it, I am instantly to leave this town without making any attempt for the liberation of my brethren confined here?"

"If you avail yourself of it!" cried the canon in astonishment. "I only wish I had the chance."

"Undoubtedly that is the General's meaning," said the notary. "A boat will be in attendance as soon as you leave the prison;

and two soldiers will accompany you to Bois le Duc, or at least to Fort Crevecoeur."

"Then, God being my helper," cried the Guardian, "I will not go. I am the shepherd of most of these sheep. What is my life compared to their faith? I pray God that as nineteen of us are here confined for CHRIST's Name on earth, so nineteen may hereafter sit down at the Marriage Supper of the LAMB in heaven."


"The man must be mad," cried Aumale.

"Mad or not, sir," said the notary, "I must take your answer. You refuse to accept liberty on such terms?"

"I do," returned Piek.

"Very well, sir," answered the notary. "I will do your message to the general."

Do you remember, when I was telling you the story of the martyrs of Sebaste, how their earnest prayer was that, as forty Athletes descended into the arena, so forty victors might receive the prize? And how, though one fell away, another was raised up in his place, and the supplication was fulfilled? So it was here with Father Piek's prayer. Between the night



in which Gorcum was surrendered, and that of the sixth of July, in which the prisoners were embarked for Brielle, four of that little troop became apostates. But, as you shall see, God raised up four others to take their place, and to keep the number complete. The four that fell away were: the Canon of Gorcum; another Priest from one of the neighbouring villages; one of the lay brothers, and the novice. I may as well here make an end of their history. The Canon and the novice, when the persecution was over, returned to the bosom of the Church. What became of the lay brother, I never could hear. The priest, three months afterwards, was hung for his real or pretended participation in a robbery.

That night of the sixth of July was exceedingly sultry. A thick grey haze hung over the sky; the summer lightning played round the horizon; the smell of the marshes carried with it everywhere the seeds of typhus to those who were travelling after sunset; and from every canal, and ditch, and swamp, and ill-drained polder, the clamour of the frogs was deafening. The fifteen prisoners were thrust

into a *treckschuyt*—just such as one sees now on the same canal—a long narrow barge, the greater part occupied by a low cabin, at the upper end of which is one little hole through which you may put out your head and converse with the steersman. Penned up like sheep in this cabin, they passed that miserable night; while the boat dropped down the Meuse to Dordrecht, and Bergerland, and so on to Brielle. At every village,—night though it were,—where they lay to, the inhabitants turned out to have a look, as they said, at the besotted papists; at Dordrecht, where they remained some hours, they were paraded on the roof of the cabin for the amusement of the spectators; and from the quay and from the little pier, a shower of stones and brickbats were poured in among them. Day broke; they left the main stream and entered the Oude Maas; the sand banks became lower; the country more choked with water; the sullen pools more hopelessly stagnant; they were slowly trailed along through the most amphibious part of amphibious Holland.

In the meantime the Catholics of Gorcum

had not been idle. As soon as the prisoners had been hurried off without any form of trial, and without any pretence of justice, they despatched a messenger to William of Orange, then at the Hague, complaining of the breach of stipulations, and pointing out the disgrace which such a transaction would bring on the 'Protestant faith.' Day and night he pursued his course. He had started from Gorcum in the twilight of a June evening. He was afraid to take the most direct route—for the different leaders of the reformed party, though professing a nominal duty to the republic, set at nought all passports granted by their fellow chiefs, and owned no further allegiance to their common banner, than might suit the inclination or taste of each. Day was already breaking when the messenger rode through the yet quiet town of Ysselstein; its tall brick tower grew shorter and shorter in the distance; he traced the course of the old Rhine towards Alphen, where people now go to eat the Dutch delicacy, Water Zootje; in the forenoon his horse was clattering through the venerable old town of Delft, and passing the very doorway where, but a few years later,

William of Orange, then all powerful in the state, fell by the hand of an assassin; and so in the afternoon, he reached the Hague, and had delivered the petition with which he was charged into the hands of the stadtholder.


And now see what great consequences hang on one little deed of carelessness. Whatever were his faults, William of Orange was a man of his word. If the faith of the States were pledged for the safety of the ecclesiastics taken at Gorcum, he would have defended them with his last breath. In less than an hour from the time that he had received the memorial, another express was galloping towards Gorcum, charged with the most peremptory orders to Marin Brand that the prisoners should at once be set at liberty.

Colonel Brand, awed into submission by the character of this mandate, despatched a messenger by water to the Count de la Mark, who was then commandant at Brielle, enjoining him to respect the faith which had been pledged, and either to liberate the prisoners, or, at all events, to proceed no further against them till the decision of the States General

should be known. But instead of sending the original letter which he had received, he despatched a copy; and the count, indignant at receiving any orders at all, and still more so, at not receiving the autograph of the Prince, said, or rather swore—for though a pillar of the reformed communion, he was very much given to swearing—that the priests from Gorcum should immediately be executed. In the meantime, let us see what had become of them.

I told you that fifteen only were despatched to Brielle. But before they arrived at that town they were joined by five others: the pastor and the curate of the village of Mouster, near the mouth of the Meuse; a Dominican priest; and the pastors of two parishes near Gorcum, Heinoord and Maasdam. See now, how great, and how free is the grace of God. The priest of Maasdam—whose name I do not know—had been most diligent and conscientious in his duties, had visited the sick, had consoled the dying, had reproved, rebuked and exhorted, with all long-suffering and patience. He of Heinoord, who was called Andrew Wouters, had been a disgrace to the clergy of his

diocese ; his life had been openly bad ; he had fallen into all manner of grievous sin ; and perhaps, among all the priests of Holland, there was none less likely, so far as human judgment went, to attain the crown of martyrdom. But as if it pleased God to show how freely He gives His grace when, and to whom He will, it was this pastor who, at the moment that he was arrested, professed his firm determination to suffer all things for the Name of CHRIST, and expressed his deep repentance for his past evil life ; while he of Maasdam, who had been so much respected, so laborious, so faithful, began to waver at the first moment, never recovered his courage, and ended by denying the faith. The good man who has written the history of these martyrs—it took him twenty years to collect, a piece here, and a piece there, as he hunted up some fresh eye-witness to their sufferings—ends, as well he may, his account of these two priests with the exclamation : “ Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! ”



All the summer's night long, carpenters were at work in the great square of the town of Brielle; they call it the Rugge Plaets; and in the grey of the morning, there stood a huge gallows in the midst of the place, stretching almost from one side to the other, and intended for the execution of all the prisoners together. As I told you, and as you will have seen, nineteen left the prison at Gorcum, and nineteen came boldly to the scaffold at Brielle. Four had apostatized before they embarked; they were replaced by five; and then the apostacy of the priest of Maasdam, reduced the little band to its original number.

The great square was crammed to overflowing; multitudes thronged every window and house-top, clinging on to the steps of the battlements, mounting the chimneys and leaning forward from the parapets. Even the towers of the Churches were crowded with those who were unable to get nearer to the scene of the martyrdom. As they came forward from the prison, Nicholas Piek intoned the *Te Deum*, and the rest of his brethren took it up. But there were in the city some apostate monks, who,

martyrs, and had devised in my own mind how I might best tell it to you, when the diligence, which had now for some distance been passing under an avenue of limes and chesnuts, in all their autumnal beauty, turned sharp to the right, passed S. Katherine's gate, rattled over the stones of the great square of the Vredenburg, and in a few moments more, I was in Utrecht Cathedral, the place where these martyrs had so often prayed, and which, even in its present desolate and forlorn state, they no doubt regard with more than ordinary care and affection.

IV.

The Oak of Luxford's Lane.

Nov. 26, 1703.


FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

"He shall give His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."—S. Matt. iv. 6.

I HAVE more than once, in the stories I have told you, shown you how wonderfully God can stretch out His Right Hand to deliver His servants, even though He is not pleased to work a miracle in their behalf. As it is the same thing with Him to save by many or by them that have no power, so it is the same to save by stopping the laws of nature, or by working with them. You have heard of the snow storm at Meissen, of the spider that wove her web before the cave of S. Meinrad, of the

soldiers that set free the captive child in Porto Santo, of the dogfish that delivered the Manx fishermen;—none of them miracles, but all wonderful instances of His love and watchfulness, in Whom we live, and move, and have our being. Now listen to another story of the same kind.


It was the afternoon of the twenty-sixth day of November, in the year of grace 1703. During the preceding week, wild storms had swept over different parts of England: the weather was unnaturally warm; the faded leaves hung upon the trees; the late flowers lingered on in their sad autumn beauty; men, who could recollect so far back, said that it was just such a November as that before the Plague year. But on this afternoon the sun shone out with a faint watery smile from between thick dark clouds; light and shadow chased each other merrily over the hills of Sussex, and across the great expanse of Ash-down Forest,—then a forest indeed: the tower of S. Swithin's, at East Grinstead, sometimes glared out in a strong fierce gleam,—and then stood up, a huge black mass, in ink-like



gloom ; the grey old walls of Sackville College, —grey and old even then,—were checked with the sunshine and the cloud in alternate seconds : so far, everything was like what many an autumn afternoon had been before, and will be again. But there were not wanting signs to an observing eye that all was not as quiet as it appeared to be. The oxen seemed wild in the fields ; sometimes scouring round and round in a body, as if seized with the stampedo, of which we read, in the huge American prairies, —sometimes tearing up the grass with their hoofs and horns,—sometimes dashing recklessly against the gate or the hedge. The fowls went to roost shortly after midday. Horses reared and kicked, and refused to obey bit or rein. Dogs bayed long and mournfully. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon a cloud of a very peculiar tinge and shape, pink, edged with purple, and like a doubled fist, rose in the south-west. Right over Selsfield Mill it hung, to those that looked from East Grinstead ; and people gathered at the doors of their houses, or walked out into the streets, to gaze at—so they called it—the Bloody Cloud. On

the upland moors there was that strange low sound like the buzz of insects, that sometimes goes before a storm. Then the wind began to sink to a perfect hush, and, in a moment to burst forth in a furious blast;—the calm lull, and the fierce gale succeeding each other more and more rapidly.

In the little valley that nestles at the foot of the Luxford Rocks, a mile and a half from East Grinstead, there then stood an old grey picturesque cottage: its roof heavy and shaggy with Horsham slate; its windows thickly mullioned; its side shaded by a grape-vine that, in summer, whispered pleasantly to the sandstones which gave it support, and now speckled the brown walls with a few blood-red leaves. An *ellenge* place indeed—as we say in Sussex—that cottage was: shut in to the east by a little amphitheatre of woods and rocks, and approachable only by a down path; westward it looked on the church and the town, “a city set upon an hill,” on blue Coneyhurst and Holmbury, and Leithhill, and so beyond to uttermost Hindhead. But a pretty situation for all that;—and so you would have said,



could you have looked in on that afternoon, and seen the nicely swept floor, the trim little woodfire built up on the Sussex dogs, (Sussex, you know, was then the iron-mart of England,) and, above all, the pleasant, cheerful face of its mistress,—the very picture of what a young labourer's wife ought to be,—as she welcomed John Lawrence, (that was her husband's name,) back from that day's work.

"Well," quoth he, as he hung up his knife, and put off his darnocks, (for he had been hedging;) "I never saw such a strange afternoon. One while it is as still as a night in July, and then the wind comes roaring and rampaging along, fit to blow down a church tower."

"So it does," said Mary. "I declare I felt quite lonely like: it seems so unnatural, first like a death-room,—and then like a ship at sea. There it is again! Hark to it!"

"We shall have rain this time," said John, looking out at the door. "Come: I'll shut it up, wife; and then we'll be comfortable. Why, what in the name of wonder is the matter with the cat?" And as he spoke, she

flew this way and that way, like a mad creature; tearing against the walls, scrambling up the door, leaping on and off the window sill.

"She has been like that all the day," answered his wife, "except when she has been trying to hide herself in every hole and corner she could get into. I hope she's not going mad."

"It's the wind, I suppose," said John Lawrence. "Down at Luxford's they could hardly get the oxen out to-day, they were so wild."

Darkness was now gathering in over the earth; but still the Bloody Cloud glared and glowed; the duskier the landscape grew, the more fiercely that seemed to blaze.

The wind rose considerably—the lulls grew shorter—the blasts longer and stronger—the scud drove fast and furiously across the sky; and people began to say to each other, "It looks a very ugly night." In the trim quadrangle the College windows began to glow with the cheerful fire; the bucket descended for the last time into the well; the last stroke of the cleaver was heard in the woodhouse;

the great gate was shut and barred at dusk; and three or four of the old brethren stood in the porch, discussing the night.

"It's my opinion," said old John Lawson,—the oldest man in the College,—"that this is going to be the worst night that has been since that famous one in the August of '42, the day the standard was blown down."

"Why, can you remember that, Master Lawson?" asked Thomas Winterbottom, the Warden.

"Marry, very well, Master Warden; and I was not such a boy, neither. Sixty and one years ago,—sixty and one years ago! And I think this will be the worst of the two. Good night, mates." And he walked across the court to his rooms.

"I never knew him wrong yet," said another old man.

"He may very well be right now," said the Warden, "for it looks bad enough. I will but just look in and see how old Lawrence is going on, and then turn in. Good night!"

Poor old John Lawrence,—a worn-out soldier of Prince Maurice,—lay on his death-bed,

Propped up on pillows, with a pale, bloodless face, and breathing that might be heard through the gusts of wind and the rattling of panes, he plainly was not much longer for this world. It was a strange night to die in : a sad, lonely feeling for the soul to go out into that fierce conflicting mass of clouds and wind, of rain and storms ; having, as it were, to pass through all that war and turmoil of the elements, before it could come to the land of peace. Not that it really matters ; and if only good Angels have charge to take us into their care, one may as well die in the wildest storm that ever raged, as on the stillest of summer evenings, when the hushed woods and the deep sky, and the calm sunset are all peace.

"How is he?" said the Warden to the Sister who was in attendance.

"Going very fast, Sir," she answered. "He was took worse just before the storm came on. He wants to see his son, Sir ; that's John Lawrence, down by Luxford's : but I don't know who would go such an evening."


"I'll find somebody," said the Warden, a very good-natured man : "I'll find somebody,

if it were ten times worse. I'll send for your son, Master Lawrence."

"It must be soon, Sir, then," the dying man gasped out.

"It shall be at once," said the other. "He can be here in an hour: I'll go and send some one." And he went out.

But it was not in East Grinstead alone that the gathering storm struck terror. It was lashing on the waters of the great Atlantic against Cape Cornwall and the Land's End: the burghers of S. Ives thought that the deluge was come again; the men of Sennen left the village, and herded in a hill-side hollow, so fearful was the roar of the ocean. Queen Anne, in her sheltered palace at Hampton, shuddered as she felt how little is an earthly monarch in His sight Who has the wind and the storm to do His bidding. Sir Cloudesley Shovel's helmsman shook his head fearfully, as he gazed into the dark south-west: Bishop Kidder, at Wells, gave orders that the palace should be barred with double care: Winstanley, gone to see his new Eddystone lighthouse, wished—so confident was he in its strength—



that, there might that night be the greatest storm ever known in England; and God took him at his word. But as yet its fury was not near at the full.

Towards seven o'clock John Lawrence was sitting over his fire, and listening to the wind as it roared and rioted along through Luxford woods. Mary was at work by his side; and so dismal even then was the storm, that neither had spoken a word for nearly half-an-hour. On a sudden, a strong hand shook the door: and a voice was heard crying, "Let me in, Lawrence!"

"Why who, in the name of wonder, can that be?" he cried, as he rose to unstaple the door. The wind rushed in like a giant, extinguished the candle, dashed every lighter article on the floor, and fanned the fire into a fierce glow; and it required the strength of both men to shut the door again.

"Why, Brown, what is it?" said Lawrence.

"What is it?" cried the other. "Why, your father's dying, and wants to see you; that's what it is; and nothing less should have brought me out. I have got here some-

how : but how we shall get back is more than I know."

"I will go," said John : "and I am the more obliged to you, Brown. But back again to-night I must come : for I cannot leave my master's property in this lonely place by itself."

"Well, get there," said his friend : "and then talk about coming back."

"So I will," replied he. "But what are you about, Mary?"

"I am going too," she answered. "Your father has been a father to me also : and it is fit that I should be a child to him."

"You can't," said her husband.

"The wind will take you off your feet," cried Brown.

"Let me try," said Mary Lawrence.

"Well, well," cried her husband, after some more discussion : "let her have her own way ; it's a kind way at all events. We must do what we can for you."

And presently they sallied out.

That was a night indeed. All over England there was wild terror and confusion. The wind was grappling, like a fierce beast, on the Somerset-

setshire towers, ripping up roofs, dashing in windows, striking down pinnacles : on the open villages of Dorsetshire it fell like a conquering army ; haystacks were toppled over : chimneys crashed down : cottages fell in : weathercocks were torn off : in the New Forest, brave old oaks, that had wrestled with the tempest since the time of William Rufus, fought their last fight that night, and ploughed up the ground with their dislodged roots ; many a fair spire, that had seen four hundred winters, left its stump in ruins to bear witness of what it had been : the city streets were swept by tiles and slates as by a shower of artillery : the scaffolding round the unfinished dome of S. Paul's creaked and screamed ; here and there a pole was dashed off, here and there an upright gave way, but man's art prevailed : in the forest-glades, the deer died of terror : owls and goat-suckers, and other night birds were dashed on the ground ; hundreds of barns were blown down ; field, village, and city,—the horror was everywhere the same.

Now struggling onward along sheltered paths,—now breasting the wind in a compara-

tive lull,—now crouching on the ground when its fury swept over them,—our party, step by step, won their way; and saw, through the stormy darkness, the faint outline of the College above them. The Chapel only was dark; for every room, lighted up, showed that the brethren had not dared to go to bed, and had crowded to that side of the Court where the wind was least. Bravely mounting the hill, they reached the porch, and rang.

“You are in time, John,” said the porter. “Your wife, too! why, mistress, it is a miracle that you could get on!”

“I am here, thank God!” said Mary Lawrence, as she set herself to rights in the porch; “but how I got here, I scarcely know. Now let us go in.”

Spite of the wind, the dying man's room seemed silent. The nurse rose, drew back the curtain, shaded the light with her hand, and they looked on the death-bed. The old man knew them, and welcomed them with a smile; but speech had failed him.

For four long hours they sat and watched the conquest of death. And why do I not tell

you that the Priest was there, to fix the hopes and thoughts of the soul, while it could hope or think at all, on Him That by His death had destroyed death? Because I am telling you of a mournful time in the history of the Church of England; when Priests were lukewarm, and people careless; and the dying man was left to die as he might, and the soul went forth unabsolved and uncommended to the judgment-seat.

One or two prayers John Lawrence read, but for the most part they kept silence. Outside, the distant roar of the wind,—its nearer rush,—its growl and leap on the building, over and over again; inside, no change but the stirring of the fire, the snuffing of the candle, and now and then the intermitted gasp of the dying man.

At the turn of the night the soul went forth; while the storm of the elements was roaring more loudly than ever.

Half-an-hour later, John prepared himself for his return. He *would* go: he would not leave the things by themselves,—his wife should return next morning. He roused the porter, and went out.

By that time the tempest was nearly at its height, England was half a wilderness; Sir Cloudesley Shovel's fleet was dashing to pieces on the Scilly rocks; Bishop Kidder lay a mangled mass, under the ruins of his chamber; Winstanley and his erection were at the bottom of the ocean; many and many a corpse was buried under the fallen cottage, or in the town street; huge trees barriered up every road; from three hundred different vessels, grinding on the English coast, and from fifty thousand seamen, the last cry for mercy, or the last blasphemy, had gone up to heaven. To stir in the full fury of the blast was impossible. But John Lawrence, watching his opportunity, got on by degrees; and at length turned into the deep, hollow lane that leads down to Luxford Farm.

A lovely lane, indeed, in early spring; when children go out to look for the first primrose, and bring home wonderful tales that the alder is really out, that a lark really sang, that the daisies are on the sunny bank, that there is one branch of blackthorn in blossom, and carry back one half-opened primrose-bud as a trophy over winter. Lovelier it is in the May night,

when the nightingale is there ; and, as a saintly Bishop once wrote,

“ When with thick delicious warble far and wide her notes
she flings,
Telling of the happy spring-tide, and the joys that summer brings ;
Fills the hill-side, fills the valley, bids the groves and thickets ring,
Made indeed exceeding glorious through the joyousness of spring.”

But in that fearful night, scarcely less lovely it seemed to the way-worn man, as plunging between its walls of rock, he bent his way down into the valley. The trees and bushes that skirted the steep summits of the lane side, roared, and whistled, and groaned ; but into the river-like bed of the road the wind only penetrated when it shifted a little, as it was now occasionally beginning to do, to the south. At length, when the traveller was about half-way down the lane, so long, wild, and furious a blast drove up it, that he stepped back for shelter to a cranny of the rock. Almost at the same moment an oak, that anchored directly over his head, was torn up, and dashed into

the road; rendering it impossible for him to get out, but not hurting him in the least.

Here, for two hours,—the most awful hours of all,—he stood in pitch darkness, a witness to such fearful sounds as human ears have hardly ever heard. To him the hours were years; he thought that chaos must be returning,—that the sun should long since have risen; but the night grew darker, and the wind higher. At length it began to rain in fitty squalls; the wind abated a little; the rain grew steadier; it poured as if the windows of heaven were open; the gusts grew further and further between, and less fierce when they blew; and by the time that the first faint daylight came into the lane, there was little more than a common high gale.

Morning broke,—a fearful morning indeed. At sunset the land had been as the garden of Eden; now it was a desolate wilderness. Men began to venture out, and John Lawrence was soon released.

“Mark that commandment well,” he used to say, when in after years he was catechising his children, “mark that fifth commandment

well, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.' If your mother and I had not gone out through the great storm to your poor grandfather, we should both have been buried in the old cottage, as many another was that night. And when I *would* go back there, I should have died by myself, when our house fell in, had it not been for the oak. Ah! that was a sad Christmas that followed, with the fast just before; but we had cause enough to be thankful. And so I tell you, children, Never say the Fifth Commandment without thinking of the Oak of Luxford's Lane.

V.

The Boulder of Val' de Passos.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Collect. Almighty God, Who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

I HAD been riding all day through the wild glens of the Estrella mountain, the back-bone of Portugal. Evening was coming on, and our journey was drawing towards its close. We were winding along the side of the last ravine, and could already see the little white chapel crowning a steep peak, near which, in the pilgrims' house, we were to pass the night. It was such a pastoral country and scene, as

might almost make one believe what the poets tell us about Arcadia. There were goat-herds, stretched on the top of mossy rocks and piping to their goats; flocks of black sheep, their tails tipped with white, were hanging, as it were, on the edge of the mountain ravine; girls were returning from the fountain with the pitcher balanced on their heads; shepherds were giving their flocks drink at the tank by the well. So I went on, thinking of all those lovely sketches of such a life that we find in the Old Testament; of Jacob meeting Rachel, of Moses by the well of Midian, of Saul and his servant entering Mizpeh, "about the time that women go forth to draw water."

My mule was sorely tired; so I dismounted, and left it to follow its own track, while I walked by the guide and asked the name of this peak and of that glen. To the right, the mountain, along whose side we were passing, towered up into the clouds; to the left it shelved abruptly down to a little hamlet, that, half a mile below us, glimmered up through the evening light. The whole was covered with huge rocks and boulders of granite, in

every curious variety of shape—I had almost said, of attitude. Some were like evil beasts, ready to spring out on the traveller; some like a decaying and tumble-down cottage; some like a ship in full sail that had suddenly, by the wand of a magician, been turned into stone; some had the likeness of a human face; and some, without any great stretch of fancy, bore a resemblance to those fiends whom the old painters loved to represent in their pictures of the Last Doom. We presently passed one which might be about the size, as it was in the shape, of a barn; and which was distinguished from the others by having been split into four fragments, and by a little wooden cross, planted in the turf by its side.

“What blow could have shattered such a rock?” I inquired of my guide.

“It is a long story, Senhor, and a strange story too,” he replied, “but I will tell it you, if you will; you will have time to hear it before we get to Nossa Senhora da Atalaya.” So stopping a moment to arrange the baggage of the sumpter mule, he told me then what I am going to tell you now. And we may reckon

it as another triumph of the Cross in a country in which I have not, I think, as yet, related any.

Down in that little hamlet—they call it Val' de Passos—a group of peasant women were standing round the door of a cottage. Their own loads of grass, balanced on the handkerchief folded neatly over their heads; the five or six mules, laden with sacks of maize; the two ponies, each carrying a crate with its four jars of wine; the wiry-haired terriers that went bounding and barking about, all showed that they were starting for market. They were indeed, going to S. Romão, about a league and a half off: turn round and you may see the white tower of its church just peeping above that wood of chesnuts, by the old mill in the valley.

“You will take care of little Dolores for me then,” said a young mother, as she gave her baby into the arms of a girl, who, with distaff in her hand, was standing by and bidding farewell to the party.

“That I will, Antonia,” she replied; “I will spin here as well as at home; and I will leave your cottage till you come back.”

"Thank you. Remain," she continued in the usual Portuguese fashion, "with God and our Lady."

The mule bells rang out merrily; the women bade a cheerful adieu to their children; the dogs yelped and barked louder than ever; and the little party set off along the steep, rocky road that leads down to S. Romão.

"Stay you with me, Francisca," said Maria Pinheiros, for that was the name of the young nurse. "Sit down in the shade of the vine arbour: and I will come and spin with you as soon as I have hushed the child off to sleep."

Accordingly, calling Vasco the shepherd's dog to her, she went into the cottage. In the meantime, Pedro, the oldest man in the village, (people said that he could remember the Great Earthquake) crawled out for his morning's walk; and sat himself down just outside the rough pile of stones that formed the fence of Antonia's garden, and close to the arbour in which Francisca was at work.

Presently Maria came from the cottage, and saying, "She is asleep now; we shall hear her if she wakes," sat down by her friend. For

some time the spinning went on merrily ; and, sheltered as they were by the vine leaves, they hardly noticed what a change had come over the face of the sky. It had been a bright blue morning, with a pleasant southerly wind which had stopped so long to play among out-of-the-way valleys, and curious little nooks amidst the green hills, as to come loaded with the perfume of the cistus and the May. But it had gradually died away. A haze began to spread over the sky ; first, scarcely to be noticed ; then, gradually thickening and deepening in colour, till not a trace of blue was to be seen in the heaven. The sun, now almost at his noonday height, looked like a red ball ; the insects had left off humming ; there was not a single bee at work in the lavender beds of the little garden ; and the goats in a ravine just below, were playing such curious antics, and leaping about in so extraordinary a manner, that it only seemed wonderful how they escaped being dashed to pieces.

“This is strange weather, too,” cried Francisca.

“Strange !” replied Pedro, looking up from

where he was lying. "Yes, and a great deal more strange than pleasant."

"How do you mean?" cried both the girls at once.

"I never saw this kind of haze before, without its having an earthquake at the end," said the old man. "I can remember three or four, and this is the way they always began."

"Pray don't say so," cried Maria.

"My saying it, or not saying it, will make no difference as to its coming to pass," answered Pedro: "that is in God's hands and not in mine. As for me, I shall be getting home; somehow I feel safer there than anywhere else. And yet, it is a foolish thought too; as if God's care were not here as well as in the village."

"What had I better do?" said Maria. "I cannot leave the baby here; and it is a long way to carry it down to my mother's house." As she spoke Vasco came trotting up from the cottage; and pulling Maria by her dress, seemed as if he were urging her to go thither with him.

"Why, what is the matter with the dog?" she said. "I never saw him so before."

"It is my belief," returned old Pedro, "that he knows what is coming on; for God sometimes gives those dumb beasts wisdom enough to put men to shame. I have no doubt now, that he wants you to bring the baby out; and if I were you I would go at once."

Maria started up and followed the dog. Vasco bounded into the cottage, took hold of the cradle with his teeth, and tried to pull it towards the door.

"No, no, Vasco, this is a better way," said Maria. She took the baby up and returned with it to the harbour.

"That is right," said the old man. "Look, that grass will make it as good a cradle as you can want." And, accordingly, she laid it down on some that had been cut that morning for the supply of the mules.

"Well, as I said, I shall go," continued old Pedro; "but you can hardly be safer than you are here, whatever may happen."

"I will stay with you," said Francisca. "Let us go with Pedro as far as the turn of the lane—it is not out of hearing of this, and we shall see better how the mountains look."

——“Now, Senhor,” said the guide, “look down yonder just across that water-mill, where I point: what do you see?”

“It is so far off,” I answered, “that I can hardly make it out; but it seems to me like a Cross.” And unslinging the little telescope that I was carrying, I saw plainly that it was so.

“So it is,” said the guide; “and just on that green brow it was where they went and stood. You see, that place commands a view of the whole mountain up to the very top.” And he swept round his hand as if to give effect to his words.

——That was the place, then, where Maria and Francisca were standing together after old Pedro had gone on by himself towards the other end of Val' de Passos. Though there was such a thick haze over the sky, yet every object in the distant horizon was perfectly and unnaturally clear. The rocks at the top of the mountain ridge seemed as distinct as if they had been twenty yards, instead of a mile and a half off; the stunted bushes that grew amongst them seemed pencilled out against

the sky. There was such an intense stillness, that the little river Deste in the plain far below could be heard murmuring over its rocks.

They were looking up to the ridge of the mountain. Now, crowning a little brow which formed its very highest point, there was a huge boulder, in shape something like an uncouth square, and leaning a little forward over the valley. Every child in the village knew it well; and it went by the name of "Dom Sebastian's dining table,"—because, men said, that unfortunate king had taken his dinner on the turf by its side, not long before his last fatal expedition to Africa.

Now, you are to understand that the ground for perhaps half-a-dozen yards immediately in front of this rock, sloped down very gently and gradually; but, after that, the mountain side broke steeply away, craggy and precipitous, and sometimes almost perpendicular, right down to Antonia's cottage.

Both the friends happened to have their eyes fixed on this rock. "Look," said Francisca, "it is moving!"

“What is moving?” inquired Maria.

“Why, Dom Sebastian’s table. I am sure it is not fancy.”

“Moving! nonsense,” returned Maria. And as they again looked steadily at it, it seemed quite stationary.

“It is moving indeed,” shrieked out Francisca, after the lapse of another minute. “What shall we do? It will come straight down upon us here!”

As she spoke, the rock lost its balance, and turned fairly over. “O, the baby!” cried Maria; “I promised its mother not to leave it.” And she was darting off towards the cottage, when her friend caught her.

“You shall not go, Maria,” she said. “It is running into certain destruction.”

“But I will go,” cried Maria, tearing herself away. “I will either save the baby, or lose my own life.”

“Then go by yourself,” said Francisca. “S. Mary preserve us—do but look!” She herself turned, and ran towards the village, still watching the rock. For all this, which it takes me so long to tell, did not take five seconds to

happen. The rock turned over three or four times, each more swiftly than the other. Then, coming to the edge of the level ground, it leapt sheer down on to that boulder which I had seen shattered in pieces. They who heard the sound say, that it was more fearful than any, even than mountain, thunder. It was not a bellowing noise like that, but a kind of tremendous hum, which seemed to vibrate through everything, as if the mountain itself must be shaken to pieces. At the same time, a fearful wind sprang up, and, just as the boulder finished its first leap, Maria appeared with the infant at the door of the harbour. In less time than it takes to think it, harbour, cottage, garden, and road leading to it were swept away under the fall of the rock. Swept away is too faint a word; they were positively annihilated. There was an immense oak-tree which stood right in the way of the leap, with great, massy timber, and branches twenty yards in diameter. That oak tree was so completely destroyed, that nothing but the smallest splinters could here and there afterwards be found. That was the second leap of the rock. At the third, it

cleared the whole village of Val' de Passos, and buried itself in a down far below.

And what became of Maria and the baby?

At first Francisca stood, as if spell-bound, on the spot where she was. Then, without giving another glance at the wreck behind her, she rushed into the village. Every one was in the little narrow street. Scarcely anybody knew what had happened; some thought that the end of the world was come; most believed that it was an earthquake. Father Manoel, the parish priest, was the first to point out what had really occurred.

"But, what is it, my child?" he inquired of Francisca, who was far too much agitated to be able to speak, and from whom it took some time to obtain an intelligible account of what she had seen.

"Let us go up," said the good priest, sadly, when he had heard all, "let us go up to where Antonia's cottage stood. No one go down to her mother till I can bear her the tidings myself. First let us see if we can learn more than we now know."

Every one followed. The priest went on

hurriedly, and led the way straight up the road. When they were near the spot, the women began to draw back, as if expecting some dreadful sight.

"You will see nothing," said old Pedro, who contrived to keep up with them; "no one will ever see a fragment of her till the Resurrection Day."


The wreck down the mountain side was dreadful. Here and there rocks and turf had been ploughed up, and tons of mould and of crushed granite driven out on this side and on that. The spot where the cottage had stood, had changed its very form; old men that had known it all their lives, would have been unable to recognize it now.

——"And of course," I said, as the guide paused, "no one ever discovered any trace of poor Maria?"

"Maria, Senhor," he answered, "many years after that was the best wife and the best mother in Paradella, over the hill, yonder," and he nodded in that direction.

"But how was it possible that she should have escaped?"

“Only God and our Lady know,” he replied, as he crossed himself, “but so it was. In some way or other the rock had passed over her at the moment it swept away the garden. They found her and the child both lying in a kind of hollow place that had not been touched, and both, seemingly dead. But the women got round them, and brought water, and so forth, and both one and the other recovered. And, as old Jeronimo the soldier used to say, the most wonderful part of all was, that the wind of the rock did not kill Maria and the child; for every one that has served in the army knows that the wind of a cannon ball will kill a man almost as well as the cannon ball itself. However, that is the plain story, as near as I can tell it you; and there are plenty of people alive to bear me out in it. And now, Senhor, here we are at Nossa Senhora da Atalaya.”





VI.

The Caldron of Carcassone.

A.D. 500.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

“Great is thy faith ; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”
—S. Matt. xv. 28.

“WHITHER away so fast, good Felix?” asked one citizen as he met another in the dark narrow streets of Carcassone.

“Have you not heard?” cried Felix. “Why, the whole city rings of it. Florbert the Catholic Deacon has challenged our Priest Chilperic to the appeal to God.”

“Why, what about?” inquired the other, whose name was Resuinth.

“About the truth of the two faiths, ours or his. And it is to be tried at the first hour in the market place.”

“What is the appeal?” asked Resuinth.

"By boiling water, as I hear," answered his friend. "Will you go see it?"

"Have with you," cried the other; and the two were soon wending their way, amidst a crowd of others, all anxious for the sight, to the market place.

Before we go with them, I must stop to remind you that the Province of Narbonne was then a portion of the kingdom of the Arian Visigoths: the lords also of a great part of Spain. And though by the care and zeal of the ever Catholic Church of France a succession of orthodox Bishops and Priests was kept up, still Arianism was the faith of King Evaric, and that of most of his people. As we should now say,—the establishment was Arian.

The sun came cloudlessly up from the Mediterranean as Felix and Resuinth reached the market place. It was surrounded on three sides by a kind of cloister arcade, ugly and ill-proportioned, for the art of Rome had come to an end, and that of the Church was yet in its cradle. On the fourth side was the great Basilic of S. Martin, long, low, and heavy: with its small unglazed windows, its circular

east end, and its western porch for the Catechumens. This was the Arian cathedral. The Catholics met in a small room over the shop of Junian the baker, who himself professed the faith of Nicæa. Round the Basilic and the Forum rose tall dark houses, shutting out as it were the sweet spring morning, and shading the scene into a kind of city twilight.

In the midst of the forum a fire had been kindled ; and over it, suspended from a gallows-like erection, hung a huge iron caldron. The clouds of steam and the bubbling echo gave proof that the fire had done its work. By its side a small scaffold was erected, on which a man might stand, in sight of the crowd, and close to, and rather below, the caldron. At one side of the forum, on a raised bench, sat the five magistrates—or *patricians*, as they were called, of the city : wearing, as in Roman times, the *Toga prætexta*, the white robe bordered with purple. To their right were the Deacon Florbert, and the Priest Chilperic : a little band of zealous Catholics, and the chief Arians of the city, all eager for the scene which they were about to behold.

“Citizens,” said Gaudentius, the first patrician, “it is meet that, in the first place ye hear how and wherefore we are gathered together this day. It fell out that yesterday the Deacon Florbert was disputing with Chilperic whom ye all know, touching the faith of Nicæa: and ignorantly affirming that the Son of God was Consubstantial with the FATHER. Which the Priest not enduring, refuted the heretical presumption with many and solid words. Whereupon Florbert cried,—‘Let each of us thrust an arm into a caldron of boiling water, and he that draws it forth unhurt shall be held to be of the right faith.’ To this Chilperic agreed;—and, as our laws command, the two appeared before us, and demanded leave to make the trial, which we very willingly gave nothing doubting that the true faith will prevail, and the Catholic depravity will be made manifest. And all things being now prepared, we will commit this matter to God. Here, sirs, is my signet-ring: the device a serpent with his tail in his mouth: the licitor shall cast it into the caldron; and it will be your parts, baring your right arms

to the elbow, to thrust them into the boiling water."

The Arian Priest, a tall, portly man, had stood irresolute and grown paler and paler while the magistrate spoke. But the Catholics had seen with dismay that their own champion trembled. The day before, he had spoken manfully of the deliverances that God had wrought in the days of their fathers, and in the old times before them: he had talked of the miracles done by S. Martin and by S. Germanus of Auxerre: and he had comforted himself by adding,—“The LORD’s arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.” But now that the moment of trial was come,—now that all the terrible preparations were ready,—now that torture and disgrace and the yell of the multitude—if he failed—were before him, his faith gave way. There was a giddy sound in his ears,—a mist came before his eyes,—he scarcely knew where he was, or what was to follow.

“May it please your respectabilities,” said

Chilperic, in a trembling voice, "time for prayer is necessary, before entering on so great a work. I crave an hour to that end."

The patrician paused, and conferred with his brethren. "Albeit," he said at length, "our opinion is that your prayers might long ago have been made, this being the appointed time of which notice has been given to all, yet that we may use all due deliberation, we will grant you the hour you ask, provided always that Florbert object not."

"I am willing it should be so," said the deacon. And the people, disappointed for the moment of their spectacle, murmured and hissed as Chilperic withdrew into the Basilic, and Florbert turned down the street that led to the Catholic place of assembly.

But, you may ask, were these appeals right? In after times, when faith grew colder, and miracles became less common, the Church forbade them. Even now she did not encourage them, but she allowed them;—and the law of the land also permitted them. What Elijah had done when he called down fire from heaven,

what S. Peter had done when he walked upon the sea, that, Christians thought, they might still do.

But Florbert, instead of going to the church, turned down one of the darkest alleys, and entered a mean-looking shop. It might have puzzled you to guess what its owner sold,—for five or six dried lizards, fastened against the wall, and drawers marked with certain hieroglyphics, were all that met the sight.

An old Jew, thin, small, with a bright eye and red hair, and a dried and wizened face, was turning over the leaves of a parchment book, for people were then beginning to write in books instead of in rolls. “What is it that you need, sir?” he said: as Florbert seemed to find some difficulty in beginning.

“I would fain have some ointment, or some liquid,” answered the deacon, “which may protect the flesh when rubbed over with it, from heat, and more especially from boiling water.”

“From heat!” cried the Jew with a sound between a growl and a laugh. “From heat! Ah, ha! From boiling water! Oh, ho!—Now

I understand. You are one of the fools, I take it, that have run into the appeal to God, as they call it,—and now you are sorry for what you have done,—and the poor old Jew must set you free ! Ah, ha ! Oh, ho !”

“Fellow,” said Florbert, very angrily, “either give me what I demanded,—or tell me at once that you have it not.”

“I have it, I have it,” said the Jew, opening two or three of his drawers one after the other : —“I did but laugh to think how you Christians talk of miracles, and are afraid to trust to them. I marvel if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego anointed themselves in this fashion before they were cast into the burning fiery furnace. Christian miracles, indeed !—It will be time enough to believe them when I see them.”

So he went on talking : and Florbert’s cheek burnt with shame. He tried to collect his courage : he tried to call up his faith ;—but all in vain :—and that text sounded continually in his ears,—“I have not sent them ; yet they did run.” The Jew finished the mixture, and told Florbert that, if he rubbed it over his arm, he might safely plunge it for a few moments

in boiling water. The deacon paid for the ointment, and went away.

And now it was the second hour. The forum was even fuller than before. Chilperic trembled exceedingly as he came forward;—the Catholics thought that Florbert was more cheerful,—but yet there was something in his countenance that they could not understand;—an expression of shame,—the last that, in thus contending for the glory of God, they would have expected to see him show. More furiously than ever bubbled the caldron; the clouds of steam volumed high into the air, and were tinged by the early sun with pink.

“Now, sir,” said Chilperic to Florbert, “as you are the challenger, it is for you to make the attempt first.”

The multitude shouted in approval: and Florbert, with slow and unwilling steps, mounted the scaffold. The lictor stood by his side;—and the Arian Priest was at the bottom of the steps. Unbuckling his *lacerna*, or outer coat, and throwing it by, the deacon bared his arm from the toga. At the moment he did so, a loud cry burst from the crowd.

"He has drugs! he has drugs!" shouted Chilperic.

"Stay, sir," said the lictor:—"the magistrates will not allow this."

Gaudentius rose to speak; but the multitude yelled and hooted, and he could not be heard. "Out upon the Catholic! Away with him that believes in the Consubstantial! Put him in prison! Cut off his right arm!" And in the midst of the uproar, Florbert, hiding his face in his hands, slunk off. The Catholics looked at each other in dismay:—but Chilperic, knowing with whom he had to deal, stepped briskly up on to the platform.

"Noble patricians," said he, and the crowd was instantly hushed,—“Noble patricians, I am ready, if ye so will, to proceed to the trial:—I have used no drugs:—I trust only in my prayers, and in the goodness of my cause. There is my arm,”—and he thrust it forth;—“at your command, I am ready to expose it to the trial. But it seems to me that the cause is already decided; and that to proceed further herein would only be to tempt God, Who hath sufficiently discovered the truth.”

Gaudentius, having consulted his colleagues, rose and said:—"Citizens, it is our opinion that, as the deacon manifestly had no faith in his cause, whereas the priest Chilperic, without any earthly means, stood ready to make good his words, the ordeal has been sufficiently tried. And we pronounce that the truth of Chilperic hath been made manifest, and that the heresy, and the guile of Florbert have been utterly confounded."

As he was speaking, a young man, mounted on a strong horse, both rider and beast weary and dusty and way-worn, turned the corner of the forum, and drew rein.

"What is all this?" he asked of those that stood nearest. And they told him.

"Hold my horse," he said to a man that stood near. "Sirs, let me pass. I must and will get through." And struggling onwards as if for life, he faced the magistrates.

"What man is this?" asked Gaudentius, as the new comer was about to speak.

"I am a deacon of the Catholic Church: my name is Auxentius;—I am on my way from Tours to Rome with letters to Anastasius,

Bishop of that city. Will your respectabilities permit me to make the trial, which, as I am told, one of my brethren hath, through the weakness of his faith, refused?"

"My dispute was not with you," said Chilperic, quickly. "The patricians have pronounced my opponent vanquished."

"Let him try! Let him try!" burst from the crowd, eager not to lose the spectacle.

"We give you leave," said Gaudentius: "but Chilperic may not fairly be challenged, save at his own desire, to make the trial for himself."

"God bless you, sir!" said one or two of the Catholics, as the deacon hurried up the steps. "Be of good courage, sir!—God will protect you!"

"I know He will," said Auxentius, giving his *lacerna* to the lictor, and throwing back his toga. "Now, lictor, and you, Priest, look well at my arm. I have used no drugs—I employ no charm: but I believe in the Consubstantial; and it is the glory of the Consubstantial that is at stake this day."

He made the sign of the Cross, and then

plunged his arm up to the shoulder in the caldron. This way and that way he drove the boiling water, while his fingers felt for the ring: and the steam clouded the platform in thick whirls.

"Here it is," he said at length, raising himself up, and drawing out his hand. "Look at it, lictor, and see if it be the same: a serpent holding his tail in his mouth. And look at my arm, and see if it has received any harm."

They struggled round the platform: and the flesh of the brave Deacon's arm was like the flesh of a little child: according to that saying, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee."

"And now," said Auxentius, throwing back the ring,—“do you, Sir Priest, if you are minded, draw it out!”

Chilperic hesitated. But he heard the cries and saw the sneers of the multitude, and shame conquered fear. "I will," he said: and in a moment silence fell on the crowd. Tearing off his *lacerna*, he flung it on the platform, and desperately thrust in his arm. But scarcely had the water reached his wrist when,

with a loud cry of pain, he drew it out, and dashing aside those that stood in the way, rushed down the steps.

While the crowd were yet lost in amazement, Auxentius turned to them and said,

“Men and brethren, judge for yourselves which is the true religion. By virtue of the faith of Nicæa I have this day been delivered : and the glory be ascribed to the Consubstantial !”

VII.

The Sacrifice of Onnontague.

A.D. 1693.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the LORD : walk as-children of light.”—Eph. v. 8.

I AM pleased to think that American, as well as English, children will read this story;¹ and pleased that they will read it in autumn: for it is of an American autumn that I am about to tell you. I suppose that there are few sights in the world so glorious as a Canadian forest in October. You who have such colour before your eyes, can hardly tell how difficult it is for us in England even to imagine it. We have woods here, deep, quiet old woods, that in spring and summer may compare with yours; but the burning colours of your autumn,

¹ Some of these stories were then being reprinted in the “New York Churchman.”

the pale yellow of the maple, the scarlet blaze of the oak, the deep umber of the elm, we have nothing like them. We must look to a sunset sky, if we wish to understand what such colouring means.

Autumn came down on the lakes of Canada. The hunter's summer was almost drawing to an end. The wolves began to howl round the straggling farms that were pushed out to the very skirts of the forest. The air was bracing; the sun shone pleasantly warm on the sheltered sides of wall or wood; but every now and then, a grey, dull evening spread a mass of clouds over the sky, and the Indians knew that the winter was very near at hand. At Sault S. Louis, the good fathers of the Mission were setting things in trim for the hard weather; the late hay came in by the *bateaux*; billets were sawn, and cleft, and stacked in the wood-house; snow-shoes were looked up, and muskets put in order; and the last file of newspapers from Europe, that could be received that year, had come to hand. Two of the fathers, as they walked out, were very busy in discussing the news;—how the English

fleets had been everywhere unsuccessful; how those that held for King James in England were murdered by packed juries and the influence of the Court; how Gibraltar had been bombarded; and so forth.

"How the settlement grows!" cried Father Le Blanc, as he and his companion stopped before the last new house; a wooden erection, with its barn close at hand, and its trim garden of autumn roses and the latest hollyhocks, and the five or six maples that half sheltered it from the village road.

"Yes," returned Father Du Halde. "I can remember when this was all wild forest; and now, here we are, a little Christian town in the middle of a savage region. I wish, though, that we could protect our poor Indians better from the Iroquois. I am afraid that we shall find all these palisades and ditches a very poor defence, some one of these days, against the savages.—What! Margaret!" he continued, as an Indian woman, carrying her child slung at her back, came from the cottage; "is it not rather late for you to be leaving the fort?"

"I am but going, your reverence," replied Margaret, "to our hay-field yonder ; the hay is not quite all in, and the winter is very close."

"God be with you, then, my daughter," said Father Le Blanc ; and the two Priests went back to the Mission House.

Margaret Garongonas—for that was her name—took her way out by the wicket of the settlement fence, and passed on towards the field of which she had spoken ; it lay about three quarters of a mile from Sault. The sun was getting low ; the shadows were losing shape in their increased length ; the western sky put on a green hue, like the sea, only a sea of peace instead of a sea of trouble ; everything around, the decay, and the beauty, and the quiet, led on the heart to think of that autumn which closes in the grave, and that winter which will end at the resurrection.


Margaret had received baptism when she was thirteen. She was an Iroquoise by birth ; one of that great and fierce nation which then lorded it over the wilds of Canada, and has long since been swept off by Christian swords, and Christian rifles, and Christian fire-water.

She had heard of the true faith in one of the summer excursions of the missionaries ; and she, with twenty or thirty others, had taken refuge at Sault, where they might serve God in peace. Many times the chiefs had summoned back the fugitives ; one or two had been taken prisoners, and had made good the stories of old martyrdoms. The name of Stephen Ganonokoa,¹ the Protomartyr of Canada, was like a household word in the mouths of the Christians. But such things had taken place in the winter, or in the uttermost depths of the woods ; the Iroquois never ventured in the day-time near the fortress, and women and children passed through the home fields and about the neighbouring copses without danger and without fear. But now, as Margaret went on, there came over her a feeling which she had never known before. She thought of her husband and four young children (she was herself only twenty-four) with an intensity of love, such as we feel for those dear ones from whom we are separated by seas and mountains, and have no hope of

¹ He suffered at Onnontague, in 1690.

soon seeing again. She felt as if a gulf had suddenly come between them ; how terrible a gulf,—how tremendous, and yet how glorious a sea, she then did not know. If it is a joy that is beyond the name of joy to reach the other shore, it is a terror that we cannot understand to come down to the Red Sea of martyrdom.

There was a copse that stood out by the side of the field path along which Margaret had to pass. One larch, like a brave warrior, placed himself a little beyond his companions, and contrasted his green leaves with the blaze of their October colours. Here Margaret's children had often played in the long summer evenings. Here they had made chains of wild flowers ; they had watched the sun glimmering between the leaves, as it sunk lower and lower ; they had lingered in the twilight till the Mission-bell gave notice that the fence-wicket was about to be shut, and that the settlers must return home. But they were no children who now occupied the little wood ; and it was in no sport that they were crouching down behind the thick twigs of the raspberry bushes.



Hour after hour, by day and by night, six Iroquois had been out on their expedition. They were determined to make an example of some Christian Indian, that others might fear to forsake the worship of their forefathers ; and, as Margaret was the daughter of a chief, she was the best prize whom they could seek ; whilst, since she was a woman, they thought that there might be some chance of her apostasy. At night they had prowled, like wild beasts, round the fence of the Mission ; by day they had been hid in the woods, noting every one that came out at the wicket, watching where they went to work in the fields, and still disappointed of the one weak woman they came to take. Now she was coming straight towards them ; except for her child, she was alone. It was evening ; nearer than the fort, the Indians knew well, there was not a soul ; their prey, unless the GOD of the white man should work a miracle, was certain.

“As the LORD liveth, there is but a step betwixt me and death.” Truly might Margaret have said so, as every moment brought her nearer to the copse ; but she passed the larch—she went by the sycamore that stood

next it—and at the same moment the bell of the Mission Chapel rang out the Angelus. Even as she was listening to its tones, an arm was thrown round her mouth,—four or five strong men were tying her hands and feet,—one had seized her child : she was the prisoner of the Iroquois.

There were sad hearts and strong fears at the Mission House that night. Margaret's husband was on a hunting expedition ; but about half-past eight, little Stephen, her eldest child, came up to inquire if any one could tell him what had become of his mother. The fathers were just sitting down to supper ; they went out to him directly. She had never come home since she went forth at sunset. No one could guess where she was ; she had promised to be back in half-an-hour.

The Priests looked at each other. "Run down, my man," said Father Du Halde, "to old Alice, and ask her to come up to me directly.—I am afraid," he said, "terribly afraid, that she must have been carried off. I saw her go out, and gave her a warning against being late. What is to be done?"

"We must get two or three of the Indians,"

replied Father Le Blanc, "and follow her down to the hay-field. But it could not have happened more unfortunately; hardly a man has returned from the hunting, and it will never do to leave the village to women."

Old Alice came up. "Go down, Alice," said Father Du Halde, who was the Superior, "to Margaret's cottage, and stay with the children, till we can get some news of their mother. She went out this evening a little before sunset, and has not been heard of since."

The old woman looked at the Priest, as much as to tell him that she understood and shared all his fears; but she only said, as she took Stephen's hand, "Come along, then, my little man; I must be your mother for to-night."

Half an hour after the two fathers, with three Indians,—all that could be spared,—set forth towards the hay-field. Along the path, across the stepping-stones by the Bear's stream, past the green larch,—and there the Indians stopped. It was a bright moonlight night. They crept in softly and stealthily through the

raspberry underwood, and were presently lost to hearing as well as to sight. The fathers stood together on the outside of the copse, and commended the matter, and themselves, to God.

In about ten minutes the Indians were again by their side.

"Well?" cried the Superior.

"Red men have been here," said the eldest of the party.

"How many?"

"Seven," replied another.

"Six," said he that had first answered.

What was to be done? The Indians offered to track them; but that the fathers would not allow. Margaret they regarded, so far as this world was concerned, as lost. The Indians would be exposed to the greatest danger in tracking them; if they were discovered, their apostasy only could preserve them from a cruel death; two were but newly baptized,—the third was still a catechumen; and the fathers felt that they had no right to risk the souls as well as bodies of three, for the hope, that could scarcely be called a hope, of rescuing one.

They despatched at once a swift runner to Montreal with news to the French Commandant: perhaps, they thought, should Margaret be detained in captivity, he might have the chance of doing something in her behalf.

But they had a better resource than this. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put any confidence in princes." At early service next morning, the superior turned from the altar, as if about to preach, and spoke to the little congregation. He told them—that they already knew—that Margaret had been carried off by the Iroquois. He reminded them that she might soon be called to contend to the death for the True Faith: nay, that even at that moment her conflict might have begun. He exhorted them to be earnest in prayer for her; and to believe that thus, and thus only, they could help her. "Pray," said he, "that the wounds of the Martyr may be more mighty than the weapons of the persecutor; that if she is to suffer on earth, she may remember that she is to rejoice in Heaven; that every pain she endures here may be another jewel in her crown hereafter. We are here met to

commemorate the Sacrifice of Him That is the One True Martyr : call upon Him, by His most precious Martyrdom on Mount Calvary, to give such grace to Margaret as He gave to Stephen, and Francisca, who once dwelt with us here, but now, as we piously believe, have sat down at the Marriage Supper of the LAMB !”

I have carried you to the amphitheatres at ancient Lyons, and sunny Carthage, and queenly Rome, and have shown you how the Martyrs there rendered up their most blessed spirits to God. We have taken the wings of the morning, and seen the like grace mighty in the squares of Ispahan, and by the sea coast of Malabar, and on the hills of Japan. Now for a different scene, but the same victory, still.

Deep midnight on the Forest of Onnontague : but not the darkness nor the stillness of midnight. Oaks, and planes, and maples gird in a clearing. A blazing pine-log fire is in the midst ; volumes of pitchy smoke whirl up to the sky ; mountain ash and oak glow purple or redly ; elms stand out, a blood-red mass, in the fiery glare ; maples gleam in their *most* transparent gold ; while on the higher

branches and dense tree tops of the forest the moon pours down its untroubled and heavenly light. This is our amphitheatre now; this is the battlefield in which the LORD God of Hosts will show forth His might. Round the skirts of the clearing, in triple and quadruple rows, stand four hundred Indian warriors; each with his tomahawk and hunting-knife, each with the chivalrous scalping-lock hanging down from his shaved head, each with the deer-skin coat, and the painted face;—one only, standing nearer to the fire, has the war eagle's feather: and he is speaking to Margaret, who, her hands bound tightly behind her, is held by two strong tall Indians a little in front of him.

“Now,” said the chief, in a calm mild voice, more dreadful than any expression of passion, “now will my daughter return to the way of her fathers, and worship the Great Spirit whom they worshipped before the white men came over the sea?”

“I do worship the Great Spirit,” said Margaret, “and His only SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD.”

There were none to bow at that Name which

is exalted above every name: but the tall pines did it homage; and there was "the sound of a going" in the tops of the trees, as if legions of angels were hurrying to the defence of God's faithful servant.

"It is not we," said the chief, "that kill my daughter; it is my daughter that kills herself, by following the teaching of the white men. And therefore——"

"Stop!" cried a French captive who was retained as a hostage, and who stood by a fettered prisoner. "Let the Indian woman go free, and I pledge my honour as a gentleman and a Frenchman that each chief of the tribe shall have a rifle and six pounds of powder; and that you, the Black Vulture, shall have twice as much."

"If the white man," said the chief, without turning his head, "were to give us as many rifles as there are trees in the forest, and as many pounds of powder as they have leaves, it would not free the woman. Loose her right arm, my children, but hold her fast."

"You see," said Margaret to him, "how it is. God be blessed. I am not afraid of death,

though it be a cruel one: my sins have deserved much more. If you live to return, let the fathers at Sault know how I ended: and now pray to God to pardon me, and to give me courage."

"God forget me if I forget you, now or hereafter," said the Frenchman.

The chief seized Margaret's right hand in his own, and with his sharp Indian knife tore one nail after another from the quick flesh.

"Now," said he, "pray to your God."

"*I will*," replied the Martyr. And making the sign of the Cross, she said, "In the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. Amen."

"Give me her other hand," cried the Black Vulture. "Now," he said, when he had wreaked his vengeance on that also,—“now pray to your God.”

"*I will*," answered the Martyr again. "LORD JESUS, Who didst not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, call me to Thyself."

At a sign from the chief, the Indians leapt on their captive with loud yells, tore her clothes

from her, struck at her with their knives, but fettered her, maimed her with their hatchets, till as the French bystander afterwards said, seemed a marvel to him that she should still breathe. But she did live; and was pushed into a hut hard by, while her tormentors busied themselves in preparing the stake. In the hut lived a poor Frenchwoman, also a prisoner.

"Courage, my sister!" she cried, as Margaret sank down on some matting. "Courage yet a little while! It is not much more than you can have to endure: two hours past, and you will have forgotten all! But is there anything that you would wish done, after you are in blessedness?"

"My child," she answered with a faint voice "I trust that they will take its life rather than bring it up among themselves. Do what you can to save it."

"Indeed I will," said the poor woman; and then, seeing that Margaret had hardly the strength to speak, she knelt down by her side and prayed quietly.

You would not have the heart to hear,—I at least have not the heart to tell,—what this sad

vant of GOD had the courage to bear. The Indians roast their prisoners at a slow fire; and then, when life is plainly going, they set them free, bid them run, and so stone them to death. The French officer stood by the whole time; and every now and then he said such words as he could of comfort and hope. But who, unless the HOLY GHOST filled him with wisdom, could speak at such a time?

At length Margaret gasped out, "Let me have a cup of water!"

"Bring it her," said the chief.

"No," she continued, recollecting herself, "I will not have it. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST suffered thirst upon the Cross for me, and GOD forbid that I should not endure it at the stake for Him!"

It is dreadful even to think of two or three such hours. But remember what *she* thinks of them now, and then you may. They loosed her at length, and bid her, as they untwisted the chains from the mangled and charred frame, to "run for her life."

She sank down on her knees, and said, "LORD, lay not this sin to their charge!"

And almost at the same moment a shower of stones sent her to glory.

The Frenchwoman had taken charge of Margaret's child, and had hushed it off to sleep. Little Francisca, for that was her name, was nearly three years old; and while her mother was suffering at the stake, she lay in the calmest sleep of infancy, disturbed neither by the wild shouts of the Indians, nor by the fierce glare of the flames. The Black Vulture had desired to spare her life; but one of the warriors that had taken the prize insisted on throwing the child into the same fire that had consumed the mother:

"At least be thus far merciful," pleaded the poor Frenchwoman. "Put the baby out of its misery at once. You can but want its life."

"I will destroy it," said the Iroquois, "the way I think best." And rudely snatching up the child, he carried her towards the stake. Poor little Francisca, aroused from her sleep, and held in an iron grasp, cried loudly and bitterly. Still the Iroquois strode on; but just as he entered the circle of warriors, the child stretched out its hands in an ecstasy of

eagerness ; her whole face lighted up with a thrill of joy ; and looking towards the tree tops she cried,

“ Mother ! mother ! ”

The Indians gazed ; but *they* could see nothing more than the solemn swaying of the pines in the moonbeams.

“ Mother ! mother ! ” cried little Francisca still more rapturously. “ O mother, how beautiful you are ! ”

“ My son shall not touch that child,” said the chief. “ The God of the white men will not have it so.”

“ Give it to me,” said the French officer. “ I offer for it what I offered for the life of its mother, now a saint in heaven.”

They held a short council, and the offer was accepted. And Francisca lived to understand how near and dear an interest she had in that verse, “ The noble army of Martyrs praise Thee ! ”



VIII.

The Challenge of Lucius.

A.D. 373.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

"But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come unto you."—S. Luke xi. 20.

It was almost noon: and the great quay of Alexandria was crowded. Merchants were discussing the news of the day; captains of trading vessels were coming from, or returning to, their ships; agents of all kinds were transacting business with traders from every part of the world. Here the Roman citizen who had never before been out of sight of the seven hills, was marvelling to find another city that so nearly rivalled the Queen of the World. Here the tall, pale Armenian—the American of ancient times—was driving the best bargain

he could with the fashionable merchant from Constantinople. There were all religions on that busy piece of ground;—followers of CHRIST, worshippers of Jupiter, adorers of fire: just as in the huge city close at hand, you might pass, first a domed church with its great western porch and cross, and then a temple of Jupiter, with the colonnade of Ionic or Doric columns that ran all around it, and then a sanctuary of Serapis, where the old, clumsy Egyptian art still, in some measure, survived. And it was, as it could hardly help being, a place where men were careless about any religion. When Auxentius, the great salt-fish merchant, who professed the faith of Nicæa, and Onomarchus, the corn-dealer, who claved to the old religion, and Agathocles, the builder, who was an Arian, met every day, and every day transacted worldly business together, they gradually contented themselves with that pernicious doctrine of agreeing to differ, and ceased to look for either converting or being converted.

But gradually, as twelve o'clock drew on, the assembly on the quay, and in the great

square of Osiris, while it thickened and increased, lost part of those who had previously composed it. Any one who knew the city would have seen that it was now almost entirely made up of Arians and Pagans, and that scarcely here and there was a believer in the Consubstantial to be found. The church of S. Mark, too, where the doctrine was preached which that blessed Evangelist would have held accursed, was open. Look! you may see persons passing in through its great western narthex, and may, every now and then, catch a burst of melody from the interior. But the little church of S. Dionysius, where the faith of Nicæa is still held, at the corner of the quay, is closed, and bears traces, in its patched doors and repaired walls, of some outbreak of popular violence.

"What is all this about?" cried Caius Severus, the master of a trireme just arrived from the Port of Rome. "Business hours are over, are they not? What does this crowd mean?"

"Do you not know," returned Agathocles, "that our Bishop, Lucius, is to make his

entrance to-day? Thank God, there is some hope of common sense and reason prevailing at last. While that obstinate wretch, Athanasius, was alive, we had no chance of fair play; but now, no more Catholic Bishops for us!"

"What! is Athanasius dead?" inquired the captain, himself a pagan. "That will be a heavy blow to the Catholics. But how did he die, pray?"

"Die!" cried Agathocles. "Why, after all, he died in his bed. Five times we drove him out of the city, and five times he came back, all the stronger and the more beloved for his banishment. However, he will return no more now; that is certain. Palladius, the præfect, has made short work with Peter, whom they elected to succeed him; and we have Lucius from Antioch, who was here before. A capital Bishop he will make, too. I remember, when he was last here, I had one of the best dinners in his house that I ever ate; on my word as an honest man, sir, it would have done credit to Valens himself. I know that he imported his oysters from that place,—what is its name?—Rutupium,—ay, Rutupium, in

Britain. A very spirited thing that. A most capital dinner, and an excellent Bishop!"

"But it is odd, too," said his friend; "there seem as many of our way of thinking as of yours here. I am sure half of the men I see must be of the old religion."

"Why, yes," replied Agathocles, looking rather foolish, "we and they have made common cause, you see, against the Catholics. Sink all differences, say I, except with those who worship the Consubstantial; there, sir, I am firm—firm as a rock; but with respect to others, let each man serve God according to his own conscience: that's my maxim."

"A very liberal one," said the captain, "and it does you great honour. But by Castor, sir, I am sick of these disputes, and I wish to my heart there had never been such a place as Nicæa. Why, I declare to you, the last time I was here, I was walking up the street of Bacchus, and feeling rather hungry, I went into a baker's shop.¹ Well, I asked for a

¹ Some readers may need to be told that this anecdote is strictly true.

biscuit, and the baker—what answer do you think he gave me?"

"Nay, how should I know?"

"Why, says he, 'Great is the Only-begotten, but greater is He that begat.' I can promise you, I turned on my heel, and went out in a rage. I wanted my biscuit, not your disputes."

"Well," said the other, "there has been a great deal of that sort of thing. These perpetual Councils keep it up, till I am almost as sick of it as you can be."

As he spoke, a great shout was heard in the direction of S. Mark's, and the crowd round the door, which had by this time very much increased, fell back on this side and on that. Again the shout arose; and this time you might catch the words: "Welcome to the Bishop who does not acknowledge the SON! Welcome to the Bishop who is loved by Serapis!"

"He is coming out," cried Agathocles. "I said so; look! there he is, just mounting that splendid horse, and that is Count Magnus by him."

"What Count Magnus?" asked the captain.

"The Quæstor," returned his friend. "He is a famous hunter-out of Athanasians. He had some scourged in the town-hall the other day till they could not stand."

"Is that the same Magnus," said the other "who in the reign of the god Julian threw down a church, and was very nearly beheaded for it when Jovian came in?"

"The same," replied the merchant; "but you had better not mention that here; the Count is not very fond of hearing of it. We must stand back. Here they come!"

Right and left the crowd fell back, leaving a broad passage from the church of S. Mark to the quay. First came a hundred and fifty soldiers, the centurion, with his vine-rod, taking the last place; next, women and girls, with baskets of flowers; then the parabolani,—the ecclesiastical life-guard, if I may use the expression,—of the Archbishop of Alexandria; then fifty or sixty priests of the city and of the province; next, Lucius himself, on a spirited white horse, wearing no Episcopal robes, but the toga and the lacerna, like any

other Roman citizen ; immediately behind him the lictors of Magnus, each with his axe and bundle of rods ; after them, the Count himself, to the left, and Euzoius, Arian Patriarch of Antioch, and the leader of his party, to the right ; while the procession was closed by a rabble of men and women, the offscouring of Alexandria, chiefly pagans. As they advanced into the midst of the square the priests intoned a psalm ; not in one of the ecclesiastical tones, which in substance belonged to the Church then, as much as now, but to one of the trifling melodies to which the Arians were always attached. But the chant, such as it was, scarcely rose above the tumult and uproar, the cheerings and applause for Count Magnus and Lucius, the yells and howls, as the mob passed the Catholic church ; the shouts of "Serapis," and "Osiris !" And every now and then, swelling above the lesser uproar, rose the repeated cry, "Welcome to the Bishop who does not confess the Son ! Welcome to the Bishop who is favoured by the gods !"

"This is an odd sight," said Severus. "I never saw such a mixture of religions before.

Look ! there is a fellow carrying an image of Serapis, close to yonder Deacon with the Cross. By Hercules ! they will come to blows ; each is trying to get before the other."

"Stand back !" cried two or three of the parabolani, running up to the place where the Pagan was endeavouring to elbow the Deacon out of the line. "You are not in the procession ; take off that god of yours, and put him in the fire when you get home."

Words like these consorted strangely with the psalm. The unfortunate pagan, however, being knocked down, and Serapis kicked in pieces, some degree of order was restored. The procession was to go along the quay ; to proceed up the street of Horus ; to pass the town hall, and so to end at the Episcopal palace. It was a fine sight, too, as it turned from the square on to the quay. The vast piles of building, story above story, and arcade towering over arcade ; the hundreds of vessels that thronged the harbour ; the forest of masts, then glittering with flags of every colour and device ; the gay dresses of the citizens ; the sun, shining down from a cloudless sky ; domes,

cornices, and porticos, alive with spectators; pillars wreathed with victor's laurel; oxen garlanded with roses and led to the sacrifice: for great was the rejoicing among the worshippers of the gods.

"At all events," said the captain, as with his friend he slowly made his way along, so as to keep up with the procession, "you have every thing as you could wish it. There cannot be many Catholics in the city, judging from this sight."

"No," returned Agathocles; "they have had their day, but it is over. Athanasius stood out against the world while he lived; but now that he is gone, the world will have its own way."

As he spoke, there was some confusion in front, which brought the procession to a stop. Presently, five or six soldiers dragged forward two men, clad in the coarsest of tunics, and wearing over them a kind of goatskin cloak.

"Why, here are a couple of monks," cried the merchant. "How, in the name of wonder did they venture here to-day? It will be as much as their lives are worth."

"What are these men, soldiers?" inquired Count Magnus, as the two monks were dragged close to him, the procession still stopping, and those who had already passed turning round to see what was about to happen.

"May it please your Splendour," said one of the soldiers, "these men have interrupted the course of the procession, notwithstanding the proclamation made, that all those who hold the faith of Nicæa should either confine themselves to their houses, or follow peaceably with the others."

"How now, fellow!" inquired the Count; "are you an Athanasian?"

"I bear no name," replied the monk, "save that of CHRIST. But if you ask whether I worship the Consubstantial, I do."

And the crowd yelled out, "Away with the Catholics! Cut the Omoüsians in two! Throw the Athanasians into the sea! As they divide, so let them be divided!" Such were the cries that came from street, quay-side, and house-top; men shook their fists at the two monks, hooted, yelled, and spat at them. It seemed as if Athanasius were no sooner in the

grave, than the whole city where he had taught and where he had suffered were become Arian.

But—"why do the heathen so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill in Zion." And so it was proved that day.

"Come, come, fellows," cried Lucius, "go back to your deserts before worse happens to you. Worship what you like there; no one wishes to hinder you. But depend upon it, Nicæa and its creed are quite out of date; and the world will have nothing more to say to them."

"The world, I know," replied the elder monk, whose name was Pachomius, "prefers the creed which you dated on the 22nd of May; as if, forsooth, the Catholic faith had never been known before that day.¹ As for us, we shall hold to our latest breath, that

¹ The good monk is referring to the Creed drawn up by the Arian Council of Sirmium, which was always ridiculed by the Catholics on account of its being dated at the end, May 22nd, 356; as if, they said, the truth of Jesus Christ were not the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

which was defined by the Three hundred and eighteen. And to you I say, ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship."

"This insolence passes," cried Euzoius. "Lord Quæstor, have you never a jail where these men can lie till further order be taken with them?"

"Nay, nay," said Lucius, who, so his own pleasures were not interfered with, was a good natured man; "let them be driven out of the city, and let the faith of the Consubstantial go with them."

While he was yet speaking, there rose a dismal yell from the midst of the crowd. Those who stood near the place whence it issued, fell back on all sides; it was rather like the howl of a wild beast than the voice of a man. Yell after yell came thicker and closer together, intermingled with shrieks and gaspings, and a kind of horrid laughter.

"What is that?" said Count Magnus.

"A man seized with a devil, my lord," replied one of the lictors.

"Let him be carried hence," returned the Quæstor; "if he has no friends let him be

committed to prison, and send these monks with him."

"Now let it be seen," said Pachomius, as the lictors were about to lead him off, "which is the true faith, yours or ours. You, Lucius, who call yourself Bishop of this city, if you really believe that which you profess to hold, cast out the evil spirit from that man. If you fail, and I, miserable sinner though I be, prevail, through the power of the Consubstantial SON, let all this assembly own that the faith of Nicæa is the faith of God."

"Do not listen to the man," said Euzoius, in a low voice, to Lucius. "These things are not to be rashly taken in hand."

"Not I," returned Lucius. "What needs," he continued in a louder voice, "the casting out a devil to prove that to be the true faith which all the world have agreed to hold, and which the great and God-preserved Augustus, Valens, himself professes?"

"Take notice, then, good people," cried Pachomius, "that Lucius refuses my challenge. Will ye make him your Bishop who is afraid to enter the arena with one poor miserable monk?"

There was a cry from three or four voices of "Lucius," as if the people were somewhat disappointed that the champion of Nicæa had met with no antagonist.

"If I thought," said Lucius, hesitatingly—

"Do not dream of it, most excellent Bishop," interrupted the Quæstor. "We are not to be at the beck of every madman who chooses to call upon us for a miracle. Will none of you carry off that fellow?" he continued angrily, as the miserable wretch broke away from those that were holding him, burst through the crowd, threw himself on the ground at the feet of the horses, bit at the pavement, bit at himself, blasphemed, howled, tore off his hair by handfuls, foamed at the mouth, and then set up a succession of long, piercing shrieks.

"Hear me, Lucius," said Pachomius, in an interval of the demoniac's paroxysm. "You refuse to cast out the evil spirit from this man. I will. But that is a light matter. I will so do it, that all men, save they who are wilfully blind, shall confess that we are the true servants of God, and you heretics and outcasts from His Church."

"Send him to prison," roared Euzoius. "Are we to be kept waiting here all day?"

"By your excellency's leave," said Count Magnus, in a low, hurried voice, "that were scarcely well done. The people are ill contented that we have refused the challenge. Let the fool try if he will. He will not succeed; and if he does, we will so order it that it proves nothing. There are ways and means of thus managing."

"You say well," answered Lucius. "I am content," he added aloud, "that it should be done as you, monk, desire. I myself shall not tempt God; you may, if you deem it right. But, if you succeed, you prove nothing, save that God sometimes may, even to heretics, give power over devils."

"I will prove much more," returned Pachomius, "as you yourself shall own. I will so call upon God as that He cannot hear me without confirming our faith, and putting yours to confusion. Stand back, every man, that all may have room to behold. You are a multitude; we are only two; but did ye never read the Scripture, how that it is nothing with the

LORD to save by many, or by them that have no power? As said holy David, so say I now : The battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."

The crowd made a great circle round the Bishop and the monk. The parabolani kept back the foremost from pressing too near; those in the ranks behind leant over each other's shoulders, or stood on tiptoe; the spectators on the house-roofs crowded to that point of cornice or balcony which was nearest to the scene. The demoniac lay on the pavement, sometimes as if exhausted by his efforts, sometimes sobbing convulsively. Pachomius knelt for a moment, then rose, advanced, stood over the man, made the sign of the Cross, and said—

"I command thee, thou unclean spirit, that thou come out of this man, in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, WHOM LUCIUS PERSECUTETH."

That instant, as those who stood nearest said, the convulsions ceased, the man lay for a few seconds as if in a slumber, then rose quietly, and returned thanks to God for his deliverance; and last of all would have fallen on his knees before Pachomius.

“Not so, my son,” said the monk; “this victory is none of mine; render thanks to the Only-Begotten and Consubstantial Son of God. Now, men and brethren, which will ye believe and confess;—the doctrine of devils taught by Arius, who is gone to his own place, or the faith of Nicæa, delivered to us by saints, and attested by God Himself?”

So saying, he and his companion made their way through the crowd, turned down a by-street, and went towards the city gate, no man forbidding them.

IX.

The Prophecy of S. Isaac.

A.D. 378.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

“As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.”
Gal. iv. 29.

You have read, or you will read, in Church history how, towards the middle of the fourth century after our LORD's Birth, the whole world seemed to have agreed to deny that He was GOD. In Churches that called themselves Christian, His Name was only heard as that of a creature, the most excellent indeed of all creatures, but made like them. This was the fashionable faith; the Emperors had agreed to profess it, and the Christians of those days were too much like the Christians of our own,

and thought that what the great men of this world believed, that must needs be the truth. They forgot that the Church is not built upon the foundation of Kings and Cæsars, but upon that of the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief Corner Stone. Two great Saints God raised up to support His Truth, one in the East, one in the West : S. Athanasius at Alexandria, S. Hilary in France : and, for a time, they seemed to stand almost alone. They, even they only, remained Prophets of the LORD ; but Baal's prophets were four hundred and fifty men.

When the Arians,—for so they were called who denied our LORD to be GOD,—were worsted in reasoning, were shamed by greater holiness of life, and confounded by miracles, they took to another kind of argument which requires neither skill nor learning, namely persecution. For some thirty years, the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the LORD, and against His Anointed, by defending heresy now, as once they had supported the worship of idols. The Emperor that most bitterly persecuted the Catholics,

was Valens, the Augustus of the East. For five years he had banished their Bishops, and imprisoned their Priests, and even slain some with the sword. And now he was setting forth with all the flower of his army on an expedition against the Goths, who were then ravaging Thrace.

It was on a bright June morning that he went forth from Constantinople. The walls and house roofs were crowded, as the army, legion after legion, defiled through the Hadrianople gate. First went the allies of the right wing with their baggage; uncouth soldiers, Huns, Vandals, and Alans, hired to defend those who could no longer defend themselves: then came the legions, each with its own standard, the eagle perching on a pole and grasping a thunderbolt in his claw: then went the allies of the left wing; and last of all, the horse, following their own standard, a square piece of cloth, suspended by a cross-bar from an elevated spear.

Valens himself, a stout, hale man, though past the prime of life, rode from his palace as soon as it was told him that the army was fairly in march. Mounted on a white horse,

he was conspicuous by the gold and jewels of his half armour among the staff that surrounded him; the prætor of the city, some of the most experienced præfects, the quæstor of the army, and five or six generals that had been saluted *imperator* on a field of battle. Never was there an army so sure of victory; never an emperor who promised himself so easy a conquest. It was but to sweep away a horde of barbarians from the land, and then there would be the return in triumph to a city that was already preparing its spectacles in honour of the victory. But as it was of old, so now. There was another Micaiah to say, If thou return at all in peace, then the LORD hath not spoken by me. S. Basil, after hoping and bearing to the very furthest extent of Christian charity, had at length said, "The days of the persecutor of the Saints will be short;" and S. Eusebius of Samosata, then an exile, afterwards a martyr for the Name of CHRIST, had denounced God's vengeance on him that fought against the Consubstantial.

All was gaiety and laughter in the royal party. They had risen from an early banquet,

and the wine had raised their spirits, and the fresh breeze, and the morning sun, and the cloud of dust on the horizon that announced the march of that gallant army, and the eagerness of their own horses, and the faint snatches of music from the trumpet or the lituus, made Valens and his staff enthusiastic in the prospects of the campaign.

About five miles from Constantinople, on the road to the north, the vineyards and inclosed fields died away into a kind of moor, or rather chase, broken with banks of rock, on whose craggy sides chesnuts and oaks and limes hung perilously, and on whose bare grey faces moss, yellow as an autumn sunset, or green as the sea in a rocky bay, cushioned and adorned the stone. One of these rocks was known to all the country round. Like an enormous square altar, with its edges rudely bevelled off, and tapering to a point at its base, it was dangerously poised on a little fragment of stone that served for the support of all the overhanging mass. Here you might understand, on a sultry day in July, what is the meaning of that verse, "The shadow of a great rock in a weary land:" here, lizards, with their long

broad green backs, curiously decked as with jewels, would lurk under the straggling juniper bush, and would dart out their tongue at some unwary fly who ventured within their reach; their eyes the meanwhile—as I have seen them in the sunny south of Europe,—sparkling as it were with the enjoyment of their own stratagem. Here, too, the hoopoo, with its glorious crest, would scud away as the traveller passed; and at the fall of the summer night, all the place was brilliant with fire flies, that played their wild antics on the moss, and through the junipers, and among the young oak leaves.

“Here we are at the Titan’s rock,” said Attilius Varro, quæstor of the camp. For it was held that when the giants tried to storm heaven by piling Ossa on Olympus, one of the rocks which they hurled against the gods had bounded across mountain and valley, and never ceased, till it hung suspended as by miracle, in this place.

“True,” said the Emperor. “Did not some one tell us that a hermit had taken up his abode in this place?”

“*Even so, if it please your Imperial Splen-*

dour," said Acilius Ligurinus, præfect of the city. "It is that monk Isaac, who has been long noted as a favourer of the Athanasians."

"Shall we never hear the last of those Athanasians?" asked the quæstor. "I am sure if drinking bumpers of Chian to their confusion could have annihilated them, the race would long since have been extinct."

"Give me a Bishop," said Valens, "who will teach what pleases everybody; or rather—as that is impossible in this troublesome world of ours,—what pleases the largest number. The worst of the tortures that the god Nero, or the god Valerian ever invented, would be too easy a punishment for the man that first devised the word Consubstantial."

"So it would," replied Ligurinus; "your majesty speaks, as ever, with a wisdom altogether divine. But why those fools should trouble themselves to teach what nobody will believe,—when there is no one to thank them for their pains,—by Castor, it is a folly that passes my understanding."

"So it does mine," cried Eutropius Florus, a young nobleman of the court. "Homoiouion

or Homouision, I would not give a straw which faith is taught in the churches. It is quite enough for me that the Augustus holds that which seems him good, and that I hold the same."

"Did you hear," inquired Valens, turning round, for he was riding a little before, "what the Count Terence asked of us the other day, —I mean after his victory in Armenia?"

"No, sire," replied Attilius, who, however, had heard the story at least ten times before.

"Why, thus it was," answered the Augustus. "As you know, he had fought bravely against odds, for Athanasian though he be, the man, to do him justice, is no coward. We, being desirous of giving him some token of our gratitude, required him to prefer what request he pleased. And the fool could think of nothing better than to demand our permission that the Catholics might assemble in some one Church in Constantinople."

"Which of course your majesty did not grant," said Eutropius.

"Not I, by the Genius of the empire," said Valens; "I tore up his petition and threw it in his face. On which he had the impudence

to say : It matters not : God accepts the will for the deed."

"Intolerable," remarked the quæstor : "However, the Athanasians do meet in a shop that opens on to the street of S. Irene. I broke down their altar three or four times, and have sent a dozen to prison if I sent one : but they will persist. They shall find it was at their peril, as soon as I come back."

By that time next year, on the ground where that shop then stood, rose a Catholic Church with its circular east end and side chapels : and it was called the Church of the Resurrection, because there the Catholic faith first rose again in the great city, after having been as it were dead and buried for seventy years.

"Here is the monk himself," cried the quæstor, as a tall, spare man, clad in a philosopher's rough cloak, came out from behind the rock of which I have told you, and stood right in the emperor's way. Valens, almost involuntarily, reined in his horse.

"I have a message from God to you," he began in a stern voice.

"I know you of old," returned the emperor ; "you worship the Consubstantial. Stand out of my path, or you will repent it."

"I will," returned the hermit, "as soon as I have done my errand. Unless you cease to make war with God, by fighting against His only-begotten Son, in this war to which you are now going you will miserably perish."

"I have borne with this insolence too long," returned Valens. "Lord Quæstor, let the man be sent back to Constantinople ; when I return, he shall be brought up for judgment. Meanwhile, let him be safely committed to prison."

"So be it," said Isaac, for that was the name of the hermit ; "and if the emperor returns at all, I am content to lose my head as one that has pretended to deliver a message from God, which the LORD never sent."

Now we must pass over just two months.

It was the 9th of August ; and such a sultry afternoon as sometimes broods over the valleys of Bulgaria. Nearly the same party whom we just now saw conversing with Isaac the hermit, are grouped together on a little green

knoll swelling up above the great plain of Hadrianople. But it is amidst no country peace and quiet that they now stand; all around, far as the eye can reach, the long lines of battle are swaying this way and that, and a horrible clamour of confused sounds rises to the ears of the emperor. The enormous multitudes of the Goths, undisciplined and barbarian though they are, are more than a match for the better trained but less masculine soldiery of Constantinople. Already has the Eighth Legion, surnamed Adjutrix, been cut to pieces; immediately under the eye of Valens, and not a quarter of a mile from that which for ages after was called the Emperor's Knoll, a cohort of the Twenty-sixth Legion was receiving a charge of the flower of the Gothic troops, the first rank, the *Hastati*, scattered like dust, the second, the *Principes*, beginning to waver, and the third, the old veteran *Triarii*, already rising from their kneeling position, to support their brethren. To the left, as far as the slant rays of the sun permitted the eye to make out the face of the battle, the allies of that wing were flying with-

out any pretence of rallying; and the messengers, constantly arriving and departing, brought worse and worse tidings every five minutes to the emperor's ears.

"The Lancearii hardly hold their ground," was the message from the right.


"Let it be supported," said the præfect of the camp, "with four cohorts from the Thirteenth Legion,—that was well posted when I came thence, half an hour ago."

"The report went, as I rode hither," replied the messenger, "that its centurions were all down."

"Sire," said another messenger arriving, "the præfect of the allies of the right wing bids me tell your majesty that if he can retreat in good order, it is as much as he can do."

"More," said Ligurinus, glancing his eyes to that quarter of the field. "Look!" And clouds of dust soon showed that the retreat had already changed into a rout.

"The Vexillum of the cavalry is taken, if it please your Splendour," cried a third messenger, galloping up from the north. And the



white banner, which had been so conspicuous all through the day, was no longer to be seen.

“Then, indeed,” said Valens, with a look of anguish, and using the proverbial expression for despair,—“we have come to the Triarii. My lords, let us save ourselves, if we cannot save the battle.”

About a mile from that spot, on the eastern side of the plain, there stood a cottage at the extremity of a lake or pond. Along the southern side of this water ran a steep, narrow dam,—a pond-bay, as we should call it in Sussex,—crested by a path, barely allowing a man to pass on foot, and never intended to be followed by horses. In the midst of this dam, and where the overflowings of the lake trickled out in a puny stream, a rude wooden bridge had been thrown across. The cottage itself stood on a high broken bank, embosomed in thick underwood, with some few taller trees that soared above it, then all reflected in the still waters as the evening light fell upon them. Galloping perilously along the ridge of the pond-bay, came the Emperor Valens and

his immediate followers; while on the further side of the lake, the foremost of the Gothic horse might be seen in pursuit. The blood was dropping from the Emperor's leg, wounded by an arrow as he commenced his flight; and his wavering seat, and uncertain command of the bridle, showed that if help were not speedy, faintness would prevent his further progress. The two last that crossed the bridge,—they were Eutropius Florus and a soldier that attended him,—reined in their horses, dismounted, and, in spite of the yells and threatening gestures of the barbarians, now plainly to be heard and seen, they succeeded in precipitating the crazy erection into the ravine below. In the meantime the Emperor had been helped from his horse at the door of the cottage, the noblemen crowded in around him, and six or eight soldiers that served as his body guard, looked about for means by which they might secure the door, and make good some sort of defence. The foundations of the cottage, and its walls for some three feet in height, were of rough grey sandstone; the upper part was boarded on a strong frame work, and

the thatch was as thick as that which you see on the old farm houses of the fen counties.

"We can hold out this place for some time," cried Eutropius, as he entered. "Any how the bridge is down; and that will give the barbarian dogs a good round before they can come up with us. I trust that your Majesty's wound is not serious."

"Not a whit," replied Valens in a faint voice, "now that they have stopped the bleeding."

But long though the round were, the sun yet wanted nearly an hour to its setting, when a host of the barbarians, first horse, and shortly afterwards foot, swarmed around the cottage on every side.

The peasant to whom it belonged,—his name was Milo,—who had fled at the first approach of the Roman army, had hid himself among the brushwood that crowned the hills on the further side of the lake. Thence he had seen the Emperor and his suite galloping for life over the dam; thence, also, the gallant action by which Eutropius Florus had destroyed the bridge; thence, a few minutes later, the

rage of the barbarians at being thus foiled; while he easily divined the way they would take across the narrow swampy valley further down, by the spring head, whose chalybeate waters tinged their rushes with a rusty scum, and so out upon the forest road that led directly to his cottage. Thence, also, he heard, from an hour before the setting of the sun, till its broad golden disk had dipped below the horizon, the shouts of the barbarians assailing, and had even fancied the cries from within of the Roman soldiers defending. But shortly after the sun had actually set, and while the clouds that watched above him were rapidly changing from crimson into purple, and from purple into grey, the noise of the attack and defence ceased, and for nearly an hour there was deep silence broken only by an occasional shout of command, or the crash of a falling tree. It had grown so dark, that Milo, though he had kept his eye steadily on the place, was now no longer certain of the exact position of his own cottage, when suddenly a bright flash of light shone around it, then a cloud of smoke volumed up to the sky, and then one

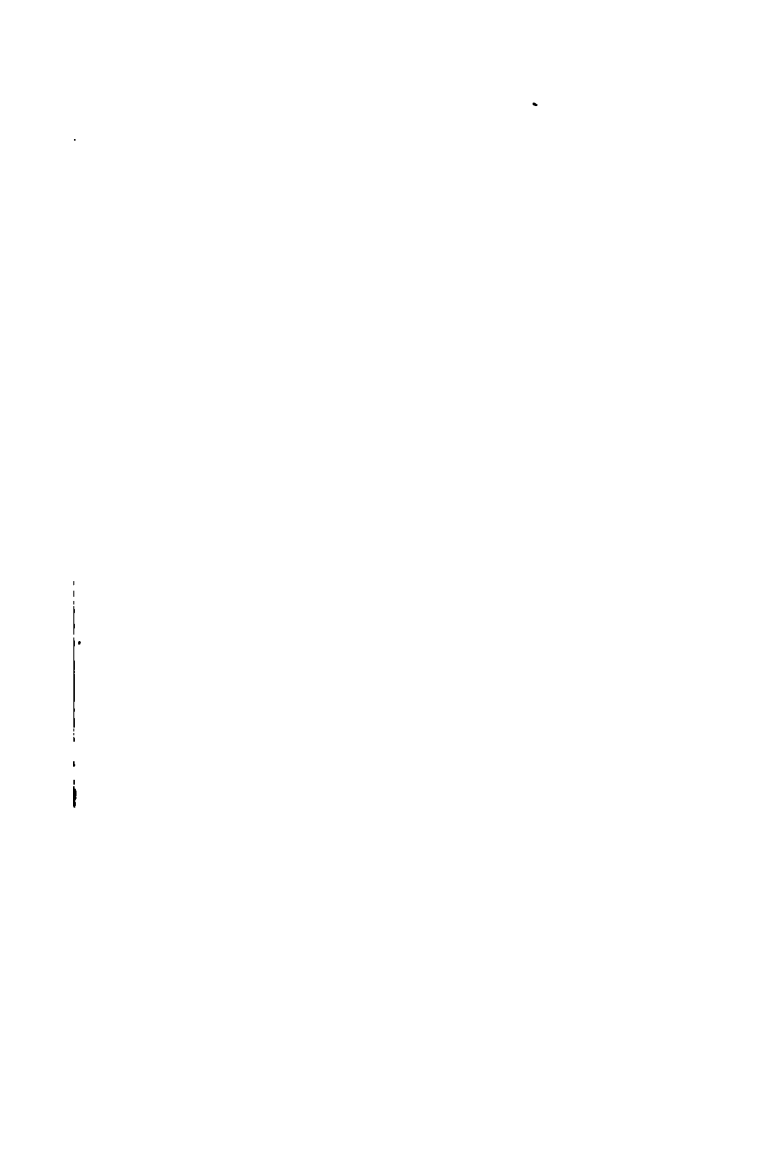
brilliant pillar of flame shot up through the dusky mass, and turned it into brightness. Five seconds more, and there came a succession of horrid shrieks and yells from the burning ruins, drowned presently by the triumphant outcry of the barbarians and their rude military music.

About nine o'clock in the morning of the next day but one, an officer, worn out with fatigue, and so befouled with mud and dust that none would at first have recognised in him Eutropius Florus, spurred his horse, that was ready to fall from fatigue, through the Adrianople gate at Byzantium, and rode onwards to the palace. The guards looked out after him; and presently the report spread like wild fire that news had arrived from the army. Men rushed out from their houses,—shop-keepers left their shops,—in the street of S. Euphemia, the main artery of the city's trade, business was suspended; the butcher ran forth with his cleaver, the barber forgot to lay down his shaving brush, the man that sold crustula left his board at the corner of the street, a prey to the boys of the neighbouring alleys; and all

with one accord poured into the Square of Constantine, the same place where, some fifty years before, Arius had been smitten by God, as I once told you, and had miserably given up the ghost. The messenger had ridden into the yard of the palace; the crowd in their eagerness shook and battered the great doors for admission, or for intelligence. By degrees a report spread itself through that vast assembly, in short broken sentences, that the army was utterly routed, that the defeat of Adrianople was only second to that of Cannæ, that the Emperor had been wounded, that he had taken refuge in a lonely cottage with a few of his attendants, that the barbarians had piled logs and underwood against its walls, and had burnt him and his attendants together; one only, Eutropius Florus, by the exertion of great strength and agility, escaping to tell the tale.

And thus a second time Constantinople was visited with a fearful judgment, acknowledged then, and since recorded in history, as the punishment of one who denied the only God, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And but

three years later, in that same city, from which heresy had then been driven forth, assembled its ever memorable synod, the second Œcumenical Council; and the faith of Nicæa was confirmed and enlarged, and that Creed which we call the Nicene, but which is in truth the Constantinopolitan, was declared by the Church Catholic to be the very truth of God.



X.

The Circus of Gaza.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that JESUS did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.” S. John vi. 14.

MOONRISE on the desert. Above the dark ridges of rocks which rose from the tawny waste of sand, a pale faint light poured down on the wilderness of Gaza. An aged man, yet apparently more worn with labour than with years, was standing at the entrance of a cave, which, dark and silent, pierced one of the mountain ridges.

The time of which I am speaking was about 350 years after the birth of our LORD; the place was one of the deserts which stretched themselves between the Nile and the Holy Land.

Already innumerable hosts of monks occupied the wilderness of Egypt; and if S. Antony had attained the greatest reputation for the holiness of his life and the wonders of his miracles, S. Hilarion among the monks of the solitudes held the second place. Many times he had fled from the concourse of people that the fame of his powers of healing had drawn to him; and now, in one of the wildest and most unfrequented parts of the wilderness, he hoped to find a place where he might serve God without the interruption of men.

The moonlight showed distinctly the furthest objects on the horizon; and as the hermit stood gazing around him, and thinking, perhaps, of that new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, which shall be the abode of those that have been CHRIST's faithful servants here, he noticed a dark spot in the far distance, which gradually drew nearer, and took form and shape.

Half an hour brought to the entrance of his cave a large company of Christians. Camels there were to carry those who were of rank to need such a conveyance, and attendants and

slaves in abundance. For already, in part, the kingdoms of this world were become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST; and to be a Christian was no longer, as fifty years before it had been, a badge of infamy: although in the south-western part of Palestine, the worshippers of idols still out-numbered the holders of the true faith.

"Are we happy enough"—said one of them who arrived first, a tall and somewhat portly man, who had just descended from his camel before speaking: "are we happy enough to stand in the presence of Hilarion, of whose fame all Egypt and Palestine are full?"

"My name is Hilarion, my son," said the hermit; "and if ye seek anything with so miserable a sinner as myself, I am ready, God helping, to assist you so far as may lie in my power, He enabling me."

"Well then, this is the case," said the stranger. "I am a citizen of Gaza; my name is Italicus; and I come to you for that which may much assist in promoting the glory of Him That is our LORD and SAVIOUR."

"If it be to His glory, my son," said Hila-

tion, "ask what you will, and in His Name I promise to fulfil, so far as I may, your desires."

"I will tell you, holy father," said Italicus. "It is the custom of our city that the two most wealthy inhabitants should try the speed of their horses against each other in the circus. Now, for this year I am appointed to exhibit these races on the one side, and Ælius Flaccus, who is a worshipper of idols, on the other. He has dedicated his horses and his chariots to the ancient idol of the city, Marnas, and he boasts that no Christian can conquer those which have been so consecrated. All our fellow citizens know me to be a Christian; they know that I put my only trust in our LORD, Whom the Gentiles blaspheme; and they know also that the horses of Flaccus are the best breed in the country, and that mine, although I have done my best, are inferior, and give no promise of victory. Wherefore I have betaken myself to you, holy father, to entreat you to assist me, if it may so be, in this great strait."

"And are you not ashamed," said Hilarion, "to trouble a servant of CHRIST with matters such as these? Why not, rather, sell your

miserable horses, and give the price of them to the poor? according to that saying, 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.'"

"But, my father," returned Italicus, "you must consider that this office is none of my seeking; it is thrust upon me by the laws of the city. I desire not victory for mine own honour; but the heathen look upon this race as a trial between Marnas and the God Whom the Christians worship. It is for CHRIST's sake, not for mine, that I desire the victory."

"Is this so?" inquired Hilarion, looking round on the little company that had gathered about him.

"It is so," said an old Christian, stepping forward from the rest. "It is no vainglory that brings us hither; us, who have seen the true glory of the martyrs of Palestine, who by divers torments rendered up their most blessed souls to GOD. It is as Italicus says. The horses of Flaccus are dedicated to Marnas; they are the fleetest that the whole province of Palestine can show; those of Italicus, though he has done his best, cannot be compared to

them ; and yet the voice of the people has consecrated them to the God Whom we worship. For any common victory we should not have sought assistance from you ; as it is, we do not think that we are preferring an unworthy request. If Flaccus wins, Marnas conquers also ; if Italicus is first in the race, then, as the multitude will deem, the LORD CHRIST will show Himself to be superior to the idols of the heathen."

"It is a hard case," said Hilarion, "when such rivalships find place. Nevertheless we must not quench the smoking flax. All that a Christian man may lawfully do to destroy the works of the devil, that it is the bounden duty of Italicus, and of myself, and of every one that bears the name of CHRIST, to take in hand. Wherefore bring me a bowl of water."

One of the attendants ran to the little stream by which the hermit had taken up his abode, filled a vessel, and brought it to him. He made the sign of the cross over it and drank.

"Now, my son," he said to Italicus, "take this water and sprinkle your horses, and their manger, and their stable therewith. Thus you

shall find, in the day of trial, that the meanest of God's servants, even though he be like myself, has power to confound the idol Marnas, and all his priests, and all his worshippers."

Thankfully and carefully Italicus received the water; and after expressing his gratitude to the hermit, he and his company were returning over the desert towards Gaza.

Now we will pass over ten days.

A bright spring morning shone over the ancient city of the Philistines. Here and there the white marble temples of Jupiter and of Minerva, and of Apollo, glittered in all the beauty of their pillars, and their friezes, and their bas-reliefs. But high above the rest, and more sumptuous than all, glowed that of the god Marnas, the idol whom the inhabitants of Gaza delighted to honour. Had you stood by the great door of this temple, you might have seen a crowd of worshippers and a little company of priests offering their sacrifices, and praying that he would be pleased to prosper his own worshippers on his own day; that he would give fleetness to their horses; and that he would assist in the rooting out the execrable

sect of the Nazarenes and their crucified God from the face of the earth. The oxen were garlanded with flowers, the altars were wreathed with laurel, and the augurs were taking omens as to the success of the contest. The laurel leaves when cast into the fire gave a good omen; the chickens when fed at their troughs promised victory; and from the large size of the heart in one of the sacrificed beasts the soothsayers drew the conclusion that the god had bid *Ælius Flaccus* to be of good courage.

The report had spread through the city that *Hilarion* the wonder-worker had interested himself in the success of the Christian. Half an hour before midday crowds were flocking to the circus; the pagans, who were of the Red faction, wearing badges of that colour, and outnumbering their opponents who were of the Green party, six or seven to one. They flocked in through the various doors of the circus; the officers whose duty it was marshalled the way for the more influential citizens; the poor *locarii*, who had come early to take the best places, sold them at the best bargain they could to the wealthier spectators; and so great was

the interest in a contest, not so much between Italicus and Flaccus as between Marnas and the God of the Christians, that never had so brisk a trade been driven in the letting and underletting of seats as on that day.

I have many times described to you the amphitheatres as they were in that age. Now I will tell you what the circus was like; and attend, or you will not understand the story.

Imagine a long oval space of ground, a quarter of a mile in length, and surrounded with seats, rising in tiers, one above the other, the lowest of stone and the highest of wood; these tiers of seats were divided by narrow passages called *vomitories*, which gave entrance to the spectators. At one end of the enclosed space was a wooden erection, containing a series of wooden seats, or rather boxes, handsomely curtained and cushioned, for the use of the magistrates. As it is not yet the hour of the race we shall be able, if we enter, to examine the place without disturbance. This spot, immediately in front of the magistrates' seats, is the starting place for the chariots; they call it the *carceres*; in front of it, you see, are four images of Mercury, with chains stretched from one to the

other, behind which the horses will presently be stationed; the men standing by them, two of the Red, two of the Green, Faction, are called the *moratores*; their business is to see that it is a fair start. From the carceres, as you will observe, there runs almost to the other end of the circus a very broad brick wall, some three feet high, and twelve in thickness; at both ends of this are three little pyramids, which they call *meta*; the wall itself they name the *spina*. The horses, then, starting from the career, under the magistrates, run seven times round the spina, going in what seems to us a very unnatural fashion, from left to right. In order that there may be no mistake that man who is leaning idly against the spina, and chatting with one of the *moratores*, has it in charge to set up a little wooden obelisk close to the carcer,—you will see the sockets in the ground,—for each turn that the chariots make. Thus, when the Red horses have made one circle, he will erect a red obelisk; when the Green ones have done the same, a green one, and so on.

Now all the seats are so full that it seems impossible for more spectators to be accommodated; nevertheless still they come pouring

in. It is not only from Gaza and the neighbouring country that they are flocking, but from Joppa, from Cesarea, and even from Ælia Capitolina—as they now call Jerusalem—many of its inhabitants are come up to these games. The priests of Marnas will feast for many a day on the proceeds of this; and if it should so happen that the horses of Marnas conquer, his worshippers will say, what King Darius said to another idol, “Great art thou, O Bel, and there is no deceit in thee!” As to Didymus the Christian priest, he had at first held back from expressing any interest in the matter; but when he was told that Hilarion had consented to assist Italicus, he encouraged to the best of his power the Christian candidate, and though he would not himself attend the games, he awaited the result in his own house with no small anxiety.

Now the magistrates are taking their places in their robes of office. He in the centre, who has just taken his seat in that projecting balcony, is Asinius Gallus, edile of the place; a noted favourer of the old religion, and the great friend of Flaccus. Next to him, are the

principal magistrates of some of the neighbouring towns ; and on each side of them, the inferior officials of Gaza itself. There also : Italicus and Ælius Flaccus ; but of the twenty or thirty persons who thus occupy the seats of honour, not more than three are of the Greek Faction.

Presently, the doors under the balcony occupied by the magistrates, and opening on the hither end of the circus, are thrown open ; and the chariots and horses enter. The moratores cast lots for the respective position of each. For, as you will see, the chariot that was on the left, or, as we should now call it, the near side, had the disadvantage of being compelled to make a larger circle, each time ; this was however a little made up for by the danger that the chariot on the off side experienced in rounding the metæ at the end. They cast two pieces of ivory into a bowl, and shook them ; that which bore the name of Flaccus first leaped out ; his morator had therefore the choice of the ground ; and his chariot took the right hand place.

These chariots, as you see, have only two

wheels, are low, have the front part bulging out in a circle, and are entirely open behind ; they are intended only to carry one man. As that of *Ælius Flaccus* takes up its position, the Red Faction through the circus rise, clap their hands, stamp with their feet, and cheer. And well they may ; for every one agrees that finer animals than the three black horses yoked abreast which draw it were never seen in Gaza. There is also some applause bestowed on the three bay horses of *Italicus*, but poor and faint indeed, as compared with the thunder that had greeted the other. As you may well imagine, their master has carefully observed the directions of *Hilarion* ; horses and manger and provender have been sprinkled with the water ; and *Italicus* himself entertains not the least doubt of success ; though the edile of Joppa has just offered to him of *Lydda* an even bet that the red chariot will have finished its seventh course, before the green has reached the meta which will form its sixth and a half. Now, silence ; for *Asinius Gallus* is about to speak. His voice can only be heard down a short space of that enormous length ; but the

purport of what he says is soon passed on to its very extremity.

“Good men and true”—such are his words—“it is well known to all that this city of Gaza has been for now many hundred years a worshipper of the great god Marnas, and that we, the larger part of its citizens, still cleave to the religion of our forefathers. It is also well known to all that, as elsewhere throughout the world, so here more especially, there are not wanting those who ridicule our faith, they themselves worshipping One That was crucified in this land, more than three hundred years ago. These games, therefore, which we are this day met to celebrate, have more than the common interest that in other years we have taken in them. Our worthy fellow-citizen, Ælius Flaccus, has dedicated his horses to Marnas, and the soothsayers have assured him of victory. His rival, who follows the faith of the emperors, Junius Italicus, has in like manner sought the assistance of his God, and has availed himself of I know not what incantations performed by one of the savage and brutish race of men, now beginning

to people the wilderness to the south. Thus this day will be made manifest which of these two Gods can best hear the prayers of his servant. As a magistrate of this city, I am bound to judge and decide impartially; but as a believer in our ancient faith, I am not ashamed to express my hope that Marnas will vindicate his honour by giving the victory to his worshipper. And this, men of Gaza, I know to be your wish as well as my own; the soothsayers have given us the promise of success; our god himself is on our side; and the prayers of all that have the ancient fame of Gaza at heart, will be joined with mine that Ælius Flaccus may prove the victor in this race."

The people, of course, applauded loudly; and Asinius Gallus resumed his seat. Immediately, the Moratores disengaged the chains from the images of Mercury; the drivers grasped their reins and their whips; deep silence fell upon the multitude; and the edile again stood up, and gave the white napkin, which was the signal for the start, to the official whose business it was to make the sign. He then, mounting on the spina, stood a little.

before the two chariots, holding the linen in his hand, and keeping his eyes fixed on Asinius Gallus. That magistrate, after having cast his eyes right and left to see that his brother functionaries were comfortably settled, and ready to look on at their ease, nodded to the officer; the napkin fell; and the chariots started.

Inferior as were the horses of Italicus to those of his opponent, the spectators had imagined that for the first three or four courses round the circus, the race would be closely contested. But scarcely had a minute elapsed, when the green chariot, surrounded by whirlwinds of dust, was already half way to the further meta, while that which had been dedicated to Marnas, in spite of the vociferations and lashings of the driver, was lagging far behind. Those at the further end of the circus fancied that its driver, secure in the excellence of his horses, had given his rival a long start, in order to make his own victory the more triumphant. But those who could see better, were not so deceived. Flaccus and the edile interchanged glances of astonishment and vexation; one or two of the other magistrates

whispered to each other that it must be witchcraft; it was in vain that the Reds shouted, clapped their hands, and endeavoured to encourage the charioteer; vast majority as they were, their voices were drowned in the thunder of applause which welcomed the green chariot as it now flew towards the carceres, having made one circle, while the other had scarcely yet turned the meta at the further end. Up went the green obelisk; and the Christian chariot started on its second course. It was in vain that *Ælius Flaccus* stamped with rage, ground his teeth, and shook his fist at his own unfortunate driver, now creeping up towards the magistrates' seat. As of old time, the chariot drave heavily; and even from some of the Red Faction there burst forth a shout of "Marnas is conquered!" But when the green chariot, now making its fifth round, passed its rival which had not yet completed its fourth, such a thunder of applause echoed through the circus as Gaza had never heard before,—unless it might be when, some fifteen hundred years further back, Samson had made sport for the lords of the Philistines on the

roof of the temple of Marnas, then better known by his other name of Dagon. The priests of the idol will do well to treasure up the offerings they have received to-day ; for, depend upon it, they will never have any more. I can already hear some words that sound exceedingly like " Impostor !" in the mouths of their adherents ; and now that the green chariot comes bounding along to the conclusion of its final course, and its driver throws his reins into the hands of the morator, and leaps, well pleased, to the ground, and it is evident to all that the horses are not distressed, and have scarcely even turned a hair, while those of Marnas are labouring at the further end of the circus, and have its full length to traverse before they finish their sixth course,—now I say, that the idol has been utterly confounded, and the faith of one poor hermit has triumphed over all the charms of a college of pagan priests, the shout that bursts from every part of the benches, seems to me to ring the death knell of idolatry in Palestine.

XI.

The Supper of S. Spiridion.


PASSION SUNDAY.

"CHRIST being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. ix. 11, 12.

"I WILL have mercy and not sacrifice." In order that we may follow our LORD's command, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth," I will tell you a story, which will show you how a great saint of old understood those words. This is a book for Lent; and Lent is the time of which I am going to speak. And the story shall show you that the Christian law is not a law of ceremonies, like that of the Jews, which put a difference between clean and unclean meats,—but a law of love; to which all

other things are to give way, when need so requires it ; according to that saying, Love is the fulfilling of the law. And thus you may learn what is that greater and more perfect tabernacle of which S. Paul speaks to us in the Epistle for to-day.

But first we must remember how strictly those early Christians kept this holy season. They remembered that it is written, The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. Two or three hundred years after our LORD had ascended into heaven, the Church felt,—so to speak,—His loss, as something that had lately happened, and as we can never hope to feel it now. Just as we miss a friend who has left us for the first few days of his absence more than we can after a longer time has gone by, though we may love him as dearly, and look for his return as eagerly. In the east especially, the Church was strict in her fast ; and, though the time which Lent lasted was not then fixed, the Christians, whether they observed three days, or fourteen, or thirty-six, observed them as fasts indeed ; many never



tasted food till the evening, and then only bread and vegetables.

It was the evening of a Maundy Thursday. A soldier, who had served with honour in the wars of Diocletian, but had since that time believed and been baptized, was returning after a long absence to his home in the island of Cyprus. He had been landed, two days before at Paphos, the same Paphos where S. Paul had confounded "a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus,"—and where Sergius Paulus, first of all Roman magistrates, had embraced the true faith. Thence he had bent his course eastward; hoping on the second evening to reach the cottage where he had been born, in a little hamlet near the town of Tremithus. So he toiled on for two days, over the crags and through the defiles of Mount Olympus; he had seen the place where the Cyprians would have it that *their* Jupiter had passed his childhood, and the cave wherein he had been nursed by a she-goat. Weary, and foot-sore, late, on the second afternoon, he had gained the last ridge, and thence looked down on the bound-

less sea in the horizon. Thick pinewood crowned the summits of that ridge behind him the evening breeze, then beginning to rise, was making doleful music through those wild acres of foliage ; in front the path, if path such a goat track might be called, sloped steeply down, zigzagging round this rock, carried on a bold wooden ledge along the face of that precipice, throwing itself as precipitously as possible down into the valley, and finally buried in the ocean of green foliage that roared at the foot of the mountain. All the hill-sides were clothed with the cistus, in its delicate white leaves, each stamped with its stripe of purple,—and the dew, then beginning to fall, was bringing out that delicious scent to which nothing can be equalled, unless it may be the first breath of the Spice Islands as a ship approaches them. But Andronicus,—for that was the name of the soldier, paused not to admire all this beauty. Far to the left, on the edge of the sea, his eye fell on the white houses of Tremithus, and he knelt for one moment and thanked God, Who after so many dangers had brought him back to his own country and to his own people.

Then he turned somewhat anxiously to the sun, now rapidly approaching the Mediterranean, and throwing a broad path of glory on the waters, in the midst of which you might see a trireme of the Port of Rome, homeward bound. Scanning as it were the space that still lay between himself and Tremithus, the two dark valleys, the woods and the intervening hills, Andronicus muttered to himself, "I shall never do it to-night after all."

Two hours later, and he had again gained the summit of a hill, but all was dim confusion before him ; for the moon had not yet risen, and the stars gave too uncertain a light to make out one feature of the landscape. In the valley, however, immediately below, one bright light shone forth, as from a cottage window ; and thither the wayfarer determined to bend his steps. "If they give me no shelter," he said to himself, "I, that have camped out in Scythia, may certainly do so in Cyprus."

Now let us go on before him, and see who lives in that cottage. The taper that was so

a rude, log-built room, in which two persons are seated. The one, a venerable looking man, dressed in a philosopher's cloak, who is poring over a manuscript roll; if we looked over him we should find it to be one of the treatises of S. Dionysius of Alexandria. The other, a girl of some eighteen or twenty years of age, who is spinning at the other side of the room, and occasionally interrupting her father's studies with some question or remark.

That man is S. Spiridion the wonder worker, Bishop of Tremithus, and the greatest saint whom Cyprus ever produced since the time of S. Barnabas. A few years hence he will go up with that multitude of Bishops to Nicæa, to declare the faith of his ancient Church, and to raise his voice, not the least eloquent in that ever famous assembly, in support of the glory of the Consubstantial. But when I say *eloquent*, I mean the eloquence of truth, not of fine words: for this Bishop held those in abhorrence. I will tell you what he did only in the last year; and the story will serve to fill up the time while Andronicus is making his way to the cottage.

It so happened that a council of the Bishops of Cyprus met at Salamis ; and, as the custom was, after the Holy Mysteries had been celebrated, one of their number was to preach to the rest. Now there was at that time a certain Bishop, much more famed for his eloquence than for his knowledge, and him, on this occasion, the fathers determined to hear. The new church in which they met—for you must remember, that the Great Tenth persecution had but lately come to an end—was crowded ; the Bishops were seated on either side of the *bema*—the sanctuary ; behind them sat the priests whom they had brought with them, while the deacons, as was fit, stood nearer to the screen that divided the laity from the clergy. The Bishop stood up in his place and began his sermon, and very fine language indeed he used. He was well read in all the heathen writers, whom he studied, he said, to improve his style ; and he talked about Olympus, when a plain man would have said heaven, and about the fires of Tartarus, when he meant to refer to eternal punishment, till some of the older prelates who had seen more than one persecution,

began to look at each other, and Spiridion moved uneasily this way and that as if wishing that the discourse would end. At length the preacher referred to the history of the palsied man that was let down through the roof and was healed by our LORD; and intending to make a quotation from the Gospel, he gave it thus: "Then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy *couch* and go unto thine house." Spiridion could no longer contain himself. Standing up, he turned to the young prelate, and in a loud stern voice, demanded; "Art thou better than He that said, Arise, take up thy *BED* and go into thine house?"

A knock is heard at the door of the cottage; and Andronicus enters. "Good sir," he says, "will you give a poor soldier a night's lodging? I am returning to my home and had hoped to reach it this evening."

"A night's lodging, my son, such as we can give you, and food also, you shall have. Sit down, I pray you and rest. Whence are you, and where are you going? But first,—Irene, set on what there is, that the stranger may refresh himself."

Irene left her wheel, looked as if she wished to say something to her father, but dared not, and went out of the room. Then the soldier told his tale; how he had served in Scythia; how he had been converted to the true faith when he was once quartered in Athens; how he had obtained his discharge at the accession of the great and God-protected Augustus, Constantine; and how he was returning to his native place, intending to turn his sword into a ploughshare, and live on his own little farm. While he was thus talking, Irene again entered, and going up to her father, whispered, "There is nothing in the house."

"What, nothing?" inquired the Bishop in the same tone.

"Nothing, my father," she replied, "save some salt pork which I have kept against the coming festival."

"What lets then, but that you set it on?" inquired Spiridion.

"But, my father," she said very earnestly, "it is the time of the great fast."

"Set it on, I say," said the Bishop. And while his daughter went to make ready the

meat, he continued his conversation with the stranger. From him he learnt, that many entire legions were ready to embrace, if they had not already embraced, the worship of the Crucified,—and the heart of the good Bishop burnt within him, as he looked forward to a Church that should be free from persecution, at liberty from worldly bondage, at peace within itself, and at war only with the empire of Satan in the dark places of the earth. For he little knew that even at that time a heresy was breaking out in Egypt, which, if it had been possible, should have deceived the very elect, and should have perverted that Church against which the gates of hell should never prevail.

In process of time, Irene returned with her dish of meat, and set it down before the stranger.

“Sir,” said Andronicus, “I am not the less thankful to you for your hospitality because of this food I may not partake. I am a Christian, and I eat not meat in the great fast.”

“My son,” replied the saint, “unto the pure all things are pure. I am a Bishop of

the Catholic Church,—my name is Spiridion.” And Andronicus, who had heard of the fame of the prelate even before his return to Cyprus, fell on his knees and demanded a blessing.

“You have it, my son,” returned Spiridion. “And now, rise and eat. God will have mercy and not sacrifice. And mark me, to remove all cause of scruple from you, and to show you that what I teach, that I am willing to practise, I myself will partake with you. Wherefore give God thanks, and eat.”

And so saying, the good Bishop sat down with the soldier to supper.



XII.

The Battle of the Alleluia.

PASSION SUNDAY.

“ When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve GOD upon this mountain.” Exod. iii. 12.

I THINK that I have never yet told you a story about this England of ours in the very early times, when there was a bishop at London, and at York, and at Caerleon in Wales, and when S. Alban, our first martyr, left a name which should be famous in the English Church for ever.

It so happened that, rather more than four hundred years after the birth of our LORD, this island was very much infested by a new heresy that sprung up in the west. There was one Pelagius, a native of Britain, who taught that we of our own strength are able to do good

works without the grace of God. And you may be sure that, as this teaching agreed so well with the pride of our own nature, multitudes held it to be the truth. God raised up many saints to bear witness against it, of whom S. Augustine was the chief; but such is the weakness of human nature, that some of them in protesting against this fell into as dangerous an error,—I might even say a more dangerous error,—and held, that when we have the grace of God, not even then are we able to do good works by which we may merit salvation.

However, this was not the case with the two saints of whom I am going to tell you. S. Germanus and S. Lupus were sent by the Catholic Church in France into Britain, that they might make good the true faith concerning the power of the grace of God. I might tell you of other miracles which they wrought; how, when they were crossing from that which we now call Boulogne to Dover, and there arose a mighty tempest in the sea, they rebuked the winds and the waves, and there was a great calm: and how, when the tribune of a certain district in this island had in vain presented his

daughter, who was ten years old, and had been blind from her infancy, to the Pelagian bishops, in order that she might be restored to her sight, and had found that they had no power to cure disease, these two missionary prelates laid their hands upon her and she was made whole. But now, you must understand that they had landed at Dover, and that they had travelled through the whole land from east to west, and from south to north, confirming those that believed, confounding those that doubted, and saying everywhere what S. Paul said so many hundred years before, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

And so it fell out that S. Germanus had reached the very northern borders of that which we now call England. I have spent many a long summer day among the hills which he then visited, where he taught, and where God gave him the grace to cast out devils, and to cure all manner of diseases. They are wild enough now, those great green mountains: Cheviot the king of all the group, Staindrop, King's Tor, over which the border line of England and Scotland passes, and lordly Hedgehope, the second

of that chain of mountains. But then those that dwelt in the scattered farms and hamlets were many of them pagans,—many of them, though they worshipped the true God, paid a sort of superstitious reverence to devils also, and of those that were Christians, the greater part had agreed to deny that grace without which we can neither think nor do anything that is good.

But as he went from village to village, Germanus left the memory of his teaching and of his good deeds behind him; and when it was noised abroad that the Picts, that cruel nation who so long ravaged the northern counties of England, were about to attempt an invasion more terrible than had yet been known, from every glen, from every mountain-defile of the Cheviots, the strong stout-hearted peasants gathered together to the bishop, and demanded of him what they should do.

You may easily imagine that he who could so well teach what power the grace of God had over the souls of men, could not doubt for one moment that, so far as regarded earthly victory, it was nothing to the LORD to help by many

or by them that had no power. It was a quiet evening at the beginning of May. You know that then the seasons here in England were far more fixed and settled than they are now; that May-day was May-day indeed; that snow and frost seemed to obey the rule by which they had been bound; that spring came according to the rhyme—

Cedit hyems retro, cathedrato Simone Petro;

that is on the 22d of February; and that summer and autumn commenced as they were expected by the line which the monks employed—

Ver fugat Urbanus; æstatem Symphorianus.

For it is clear that when even in the north of England the summer had sufficient heat to ripen vineyards, and the lands that we now employ in the cultivation of hops were then used for grapes, the seasons must have been very different from now.

It was Easter eve. The valley between Cheviot and Hedgehope was filled with the army of the Picts; thousands on thousands had there taken up their position according to the

rude system of barbarian warfare, and had sworn to root out from the land the worship of that God Whom the Christians adored. But on every ridge and eminence around was posted a little band of Britons, for Germanus had in his youth been a soldier, and now did not neglect the talents which God in other years had given him. He himself had that day celebrated the Mysteries of our LORD'S Passion and Burial; one of the huge rocks that now strew those hills—and who would not wish to know which it was?—had served him for an altar, while in the prayers of his own Church he had rendered thanks to God for that “true Lamb That had taken away the sins of the world; Who coming in a body of human flesh had accomplished the figures of carnal sacrifices, had fulfilled all prophecies, had made good all miracles, had hung as the Living Sacrifice on the cross, and as the Morning Offering had arisen from the sepulchre.” The chiefs and mighty men of the Britons coming in now from Ladyford, now from Wooller, now from Cornhill, had brought tidings of the number and disposition of the enemy; but none had ventured to interrupt

the holy bishop till he had ended the worship of God.

“You know,” so he spoke to the captains and warriors around him, “that so far as human skill and human warfare could prophesy, we must needs be defeated in the battle which is now drawing on. I did not in my youth serve an apprenticeship to arms to so little purpose as not to be aware that we, with inferior numbers and with untrained forces, are unable to meet these warlike hordes of the north. As it is written, What king with ten thousand is able to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Nevertheless, we serve the One true God, Who made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein; and they, as blessed Paul saith, sacrifice to devils and not to God. It is nothing to the LORD to help, as against all disadvantages, so at all times, and I might have led you forth against these barbarians trusting in His protection yesterday or to-day. Yet as it was at midnight on this very day, that four hundred years ago, our LORD and our God burst the bands of death, because it was not possible that He

should be holden of them, so at midnight doubt it not He shall deliver you from the bonds of those heathen persecutors. You have your orders : only act upon them, and act in faith ; and in His Name, Whose servants you are, I promise you the victory."

I remember a kind of buttress that runs up from the deep valley below, and loses itself in the mountain side where, when I was ascending Cheviot, I saw on its summit two little girls, who, muffled in one plaid, with their quiet, merry young faces, sat watching their sheep in the valley below, while a wiry haired terrier lay comfortably stretched at their feet. As I ascended higher, the grey shadow of a cloud passed over Hedgehope, like the awful shade that rests on the face of a dying man ; and soon all was dimness till I reached the very summit, and far above the clouds saw the silver line of the Irish Channel, and the Manx Mountains rising from the quiet sea, and the Scottish heights range behind range, and the Northumberland moors as I turned to the east. But it was a bright, quiet spring night, when *S. Germanus* stood on that very point and looked

down into the deep glen that lay at his feet.

The watch-fires of the Picts were stretched out in the recesses of the mountains, even as far as Pallensburn, where long years after, S. Paulinus was to baptize King Edwin of Northumberland; yes, and even to Flodden, where, a thousand years later, was to be fought the desperate battle between the troops of England and Scotland. But he knew that, on every vantage ground of the surrounding hills, his own troops, his own children in CHRIST, were posted; and he reckoned not so much on the strength of their arms, and the superiority of their discipline, as in the promise of their God, that He would be a very present help in time of trouble. All the old divisions of cohorts, and maniples, and legions were utterly confounded; and, to human eyes, the invading Picts were perhaps scarcely more barbarians than the invaded Britons. But Germanus knew well for Whom he fought, and he felt assured that, with such a cause, and under such a Leader, he must be invincible. Close at hand was a pile of dried wood and furze gathered

from the mountains, and some of the British chiefs were standing by, ready to act as he, with whom they had seen the hand of God so manifestly present, should command or advise. They had no clocks then, no water glasses, no means of telling when the deepest midnight had passed; but those who knew the stars, watched the Great Bear while he turned himself in his nightly course, and thence gathered when one day had ended, and another had begun.

S. Germanus had been kneeling on the mountain buttress, of which I have told you, for at least an hour. Calm and motionless, he might have been taken for a statue rather than for a man. But he felt that though surrounded by wild hills in the barbarous island of Britain, the Holy Church throughout all the world was waiting with him for the great Easter festival; that S. Cyril at Alexandria, that S. Innocent at Rome, were alike preparing themselves to welcome in the triumph of Him Who had arisen from the dead, having trampled down death by death, and bestowing upon them that were in the tombs eternal life.

Therefore he did not feel alone : And I wish that you, if you ever happen to awake in the deep dead of night, would remember that not even then is the Church to which we all belong, for which we all desire to strive, in which we all hope to be saved, silent in her intercessions for her children ; that, at that very moment, the prayers of our brethren in CHRIST on the other side of the earth,—in New Zealand, in the Philippines, in Van Diemen's Land, are rising up with acceptance before the throne of God, and pleading for us as well as for those who offer them.

One of the British chiefs comes—he had been so commanded—and touches S. Germanus on the shoulder. “Holy Father,” he says, “it is midnight.”

The heap of dried leaves and branches which had been piled up, was raised on a spot which commanded the whole of the valley, and from which, had it been daytime, the entire camp of the enemy, and all the positions of the Christian soldiers might have been discovered. Germanus, rising and turning to this pile, said, “Then it is time to light it.”

Flint and steel soon did their work. The flame leapt up through the dry mass, and, in a quarter of a minute, the beacon of light was visible far away on the remoter moors. At the same instant from many a hill-side, from many an advanced post, from many a deep recess in the glens,—forming, as it were, a circle round the camp of the Picts,—there burst forth in one loud short shout, the word,

ALLELUIA!

Thus it was that these Britons celebrated the beginning of Easter, and proclaimed the joyful tidings that the LORD had risen; thus also that they presaged their own victory, and struck terror into the hearts of their enemies.

For, amazed at being thus surrounded when they were expecting an easy conquest, not knowing what might be the multitude that was arrayed against them, terrified at the strange sound, bewildered by the darkness, and yet seeing from the kindling of the beacon that the whole was a well-concerted plan, the barbarians took to instant flight. By the time that morning dawned, not one remained in the valley which at sunset had swarmed with their

hordes. All that Easter Day they were re-seeking their own hills, leaving their spoils an easy prey to their Christian vanquishers.

And thus it came to pass, that S. Germanus triumphed, not only over spiritual, but over temporal enemies, and that the Alleluia of Eastertide celebrated not only the victory of the LORD, but also heralded the triumph of His servants.



LIST OF WORKS

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CLASSIFIED INDEX.

THEOLOGICAL.

Adger's Nestorians and their Rituals	1	Lower's Sermons	20
Arch's Messias and Anti-Messias	2	Mill on the Nature of Christianity	20
Archdeacon's Doctrine of the Russian Church	2	Mill's 5th November Sermon, &c.	20
— Harmony of Anglican Doctrines	2	Neale's Readings for the Aged	22
— History of the Russian Church	2	— 2nd Series	22
Atkinson's Home Sacramentals	4	Newland's Postils	23
Bage's Analysis of the Law of Moses	9	Packer on the Lord's Prayer	25
Bage's Analysis of Bp. Butler's Analogy	9	Paget's Living and Dead	26
ecclesiastical	10	— Duties of Daily Life	26
Bage's Preatise on the English Church	13	— Saints' Days	26
— Ordinance of Confession	13	Poole on the Holy Communion	26
— Baptismal Regiments	16	Pott's Lectures on the Sacraments, &c.	26
— Whole Doctrine of Final Causes	16	Preaching of CHRIST	27
— Holy Catholic Church	16	Prebend's Sermons	27
— Apostolic Succession	16	Purchar's Book of Feasts	28
— Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction	16	Richard's Short Sermons	29
Bage's Present State of the Church	17	Scott's Twelve Sermons	30
Bage's Essay on Confession	17	Smith's Holy Week Sermons	31
— of Service Books	17	Stratton's Acts of St. Mary Magdalene	31
Bage's Tractarianism	17	Suckling's Sermons	32
Bage's (Bp.) Articles of Inquiry	21	Thompson's Conciliaria	32
Bage's Scottish Church	21	— Dividica	32
Bage's Scriptural Idea of Faith	21	Tomlin's Sermons for the Holy Seasons	32
Bage's Disquisitions	21	— Advent Sermons	33
Bage's Tentative Theologia	26	Vance's Sermons	33
Bage's Revelation of Jesus Christ	26	Watson's Sermons for Sundays	33
Bage's Judgment of Anglican Church	26	— Seven Sayings on the Cross	33
Bage's Apology	26	— Sermons on the Beatitudes	34
Bage's Demonic Possession	34	— First Discourses	34
		— Public Ordinances	34
		Wilmshurst's Six Sermons	34
		Woodford's Lectures on Church History	34
		— Sermons	34

SERMONS.

Andrews' (Bp.) Parochial Sermons	1
Archdeacon's Sermons	1
— (Mrs.) Sermons on Christianity	3
Rowe's Sussex Sermons	4
Walker's Sermons for Working Men	4
Chamberlain's Christian Worship	5
Hunter's Sermons	5
Old's Sermons	7
Comper's Sermons	7
Rowe's Christian Life	8
Avien's Benefit Club Sermons	8
Rowe's Christianity in its Homely Aspects	11
— 2nd Series	11
— 3rd Series	11
— 4th Series	11
— 5th Series	11
— 6th Series	11
— 7th Series	11
— 8th Series	11
— 9th Series	11
— 10th Series	11
— 11th Series	11
— 12th Series	11
— 13th Series	11
— 14th Series	11
— 15th Series	11
— 16th Series	11

SINGLE SERMONS.

Beaufort's and Neale's Liverpool Sermons	49
Chamberlain's Gloria of CHRIST	49
Denison's Church and School	50
— Real Presence	50
Flower's Stand Fast in the Faith	51
— Gloria of the Church	51
— Works of the Lord	51
— Work we have to do	51
— Choral Services	51
Forbes' Absolution	51
— Way of Sorrows	51
— "Jesus Wept"	51
Ford's Visitation Sermon	51
Fowler's Club Sermon	51
Goodwin's Day of Offering in Church	51

CLASSIFIED INDEX.

Grueber's Discourse on the One Faith	51
Gresley's Sermon on the Church	51
— Sermon on Church Unity	51
Kebble's Strength of Christ's Little Ones	51
Mill's Human Policy and Divine Truth	51
Morris' God Wonderful in Holy Places	51
Paget's Idolatry of Covetousness	52
Pearson's Apostolic Treatment	52
Pratt, Bp. Torry's Funeral Sermon	52
Prentiss's & Newman's Recognition of the Church	52
Pukey's Lecture at Margaret Street	52
Purchar's Christ in His Ordinances	52
Pusey's Increased Communion	52
— To all to the Lower Orders	52
Rawes' Golden Image	52
Richardson's God's Call of His Ministers	52
Russell's Obedience to the Church	52
Singleton's Uncleanness	53
Slaters of Bethany	53
Skinner's Stewards of God	53
— Priest's Call	53
Stuart's Pew System	53
Woodford's Kingdom of Priests	53
Wray's Moral Consequences	53

COMMENTARIES.

Brechin's (Bp.) Seven Penitential Psalms	4
— Te Deum	4
— Canticles	4
Eighty-fourth Psalm, Treatise on the	10
Ford's Commentaries on the Four Gospels	12
Myman's Notes, Commentary on the	15

CONFIRMATION.

Brechin's (Bp.) Seal of the Lamb	4
Wills' Manual of Christian Doctrine	10
Millman's Meditations on Confirmation	21
Newland's Confirmation Lectures	22
Pott's Confirmation Lectures	22
Suckling's Manual—Confirmation and First Communion	28
Tracts on Confirmation	29

HOLY COMMUNION.

Companion to the Altar (Scotch)	7
Eucharistic Month	11
New Plain Words on Holy Communion	11
Jelly's Christian Sacrifice	17
Leigh's (Lady) Questions, &c., on the Lord's Supper	19
Manual for Communicants	20
Nelson's Guide to Holy Communion	28
Newdramore's Steps to the Altar	29

DEVOTIONAL.

Art of Contentment	28
Beeble's Ways of Overcoming Temptation	2
Brechin's (Bp.) Christian's Conversations	4
— Pinart's Meditations	4
— Pinart's Nourishment	4
— Mirror of Young Christians	4
— Memorial Yite Sacerdotalis	4
Brighton's Devotions for the Hours	4
Christian Devotions	4
Christian's Companion	4

Divine Master	
Edmonstone's Family Lectures	
— Portions of the Psalms	
Yohn of Self-Examination	

— by F. H. M.	
Geahard's Meditations	
Holy Baptism	
Horner's Daily Exercises	
Kempis' (C. s.) Imitatio Christi	
— Pathway of the Soul	
Ken's Practice of Divine Love	
— Preparatives for Death	
Kettlewell's Companion	
Lowder's Penitent's Path	
Millman's Love of the Atonement	
Ministry of Consolation	
Paget's Christian's Day	
Psalter, or Seven Hours of Prayer	
Psalter, Pointed for Chanting	
Questions for Self-Examination—Class	
— Roman Catholic Meditations, &c.	
Sanders' n's Contented Man	
Stretton's Guide to the Infirm, &c.	
Suckling's Holiness in Priest's Household	
Taylor's Life of a Canon	
— Death, Judgment, &c.	
Tomline's Place where Prayer was wont to be made	
Tucker's Psalms, with Notes	
Visitation—Infirmary	
Watson's Churchman's Sunday Evening	
— Devout Churchman	
Young Churchman's Manual	

PRAYERS.

Arden's Prayers for Husband and Wife	
Book of Common Prayer (Scotch Edition)	
— (Scotch)	
— (with Music)	
Brief Service (with Music)	
— (on Card)	
Batler's Short Rules for Prayer	
Christian Child's Book	
Christian Servant's Book	
Christian Week	
Collects from the Prayer Book	
Codin's Devotions	
— Sum of the Catholic Faith	
Daily Prayers for Priest and People	
Day of Prayer	
Devotions for the Sick Room	
Companion for the Sick Room	
Devotions for School Boys	
Devotions for Children, &c.	
Devotional Aids for the Clergy	
Errington's Prayers for Soldiers	
Euchology	
Form for Commemoration of Churches	
Form for Laying a Stone—Church	
— School	
Heygate's Manual	
Horology, or Dial of Prayer	
Instructions, Prayers, &c.	
Ken's Morning and Evening Prayers	
Liturgy for Village Schools	
Manual for the Sick Room	
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Morning and Evening Exercises	
— Prayers	

of Daily Prayers for Persons who	27
uch Indured	24
Primer	24
Compline	24
Sexts and Nones	24
Sursum Corda	28
Prayers for Labouring Lads	28
Prayers in Times of Trouble	28
Churchman	26
Manual	26
for Husband and Wife	27
for a Sick Room	27
for Different Hours	27
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Prayers for Children	27
Devout Chorister	31
(Bp.) Prayers	32

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in Offices	9
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Prayers for Family Worship	15
and Evening Prayers for a House-	29
hold	29
for a Christian Householder	29
Prayers	30
Family Prayers	31
for Family Prayers	32

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